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By T H O M A S W A T S O N,

Formerly Minister at St. Stephen's Walbrook, London.

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Recommended by several Ministers to Masters of Families and others.

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Heb. xi. 4. *He being dead, yet speaketh.*

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## Short Account of the Author.

**I**T is sufficiently known to all that have any acquaintance with the histories of the church, that many valuable and useful ministers were ejected for non-conformity, by the act of uniformity in the reign of king Charles II. which took place August 24th, 1662. Among others, the reverend Mr. Thomas Watson was ejected from his charge at St. Stephen's Walbrook, London; whose character is given by the reverend Dr. Edmond Calamy, in his abridgements, Vol. II. p. 37. and is as follows.

From St. Stephen's Walbrook. Mr. Thomas Watson; he was of Emanuel college in Cambridge, where he was noted for being an hard student; one so well known in the city, viz. London, for his piety and usefulness, that, though he was singled out by the friendly debate, he yet carried a general respect, for all sober persons, along with him to his grave.

A memorable passage, which I have from good hands, must not be passed by; when Mr. Watson was in the pulpit on a lecture-day, before the Bartholomew act took place, among other hearers, there came in that reverend and learned prelate, bishop Richardson, who was so well pleased with his sermon, but especially with his prayer after it, that he followed him home, to give him thanks; and earnestly desired a copy of his prayer: alas! said Mr. Watson, that is what I cannot give; for I do not use to pen my prayers: it was no studied thing, but uttered, as God enabled me, from the abundance of my heart and affections, *pro re nata*. Upon which the good bishop went away, wondering that any man could pray in that manner, *ex tempore*.

After his ejection, he continued in the exercise of the ministry in the city, as providence gave opportunity, for many years; but his strength wearing away, he retired into Essex, and there died suddenly in his closet at prayer.

*over fallen which do not in h*



T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**T**HES E catechetical lectures of the late reverend Mr. Thomas Watson, all but one, written with his own hand, I have read over, together with some sermons annexed to them; and since my testimony is desired concerning them, I do hereby declare, that (though I will not undertake to justify every expression or sentence in them, or in any human writing, yet) I find them in the main, agreeable to the doctrinal articles of this church, and unto the Westminster assembly's confession of faith and catechisms: and, I believe, that through the blessing of God, they may be profitable unto the edification of all that read them with an honest desire to know and do the will of God: for certainly there are many excellent things in them, which, if they meet with a well disposed serious mind, are very apt to have a good effect upon it; and, if it prove otherwise with any that happen to read this book, it will be their own fault more than the book's. Most writers have different styles; and it is well known that Mr. Watson had one peculiar to himself, which yet hath found good acceptance with, and has been useful unto, serious people; and I hope this, by reason of the great variety of excellent matter, may be more generally useful than any other thing he ever wrote. I little doubt but every sober Christian will be of this mind, after he has read his lectures on God's attributes, the Ten commandments, Lord's prayer, &c. I sincerely profess, I have no other end in giving this testimony of this book, but thereby to serve the common good of Christ's church, and not the private interest of any person or party in the world. If my conscience did not bear me witness, that this book may be useful to that excellent end, no man should ever have prevailed with me, thus to prefix my testimony and name to it. That it may answer the main end for which it was first written by the author, (whom I always took to be a grave, serious, modest, good man) and for which, I hope it is now published, viz. the edification of the church of Christ in faith, holiness and comfort, is the hearty desire of one of the meanest servants of our most blessed Lord Jesus.

WILLIAM LORIMER.

WE whose names are subscribed, having seen the testimony of our worthy brother, Mr. William Lorimer, after his perusal of this book, doubt not but it may be of use to many, as the former writings of Mr. Thomas Watson have been; and, with that desire and hope, we recommend it to the masters of families and others.

William Bates,	Joseph Cawthorne,	John Raynolds,
Matthew Barker,	Daniel Williams,	Nathaniel Vincent,
John Howie,	Richard Wavel,	John Hughes,
Matthew Mead,	Timothy Cruso,	Joseph Read,
Edward Lawrance,	Timothy Rogers,	Abraham Hume,
Samuel Slater,	Nathaniel Oldfield,	Richard Stretton,
Richard Mayo,	Richard Adams,	John Shower,
Mathew Sylvester,	Richard Steel,	Francis Glascock,
Daniel Burges,	Samuel Stancliff,	Daniel Williams.



# A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE T O C A T E C H I S I N G.

COL. I. 23.

If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled-----

**I**N TENDING the next Lord's day to enter upon the work of catechising, it will not be amiss to give you this preliminary discourse as preparative to it; shewing you how needful it is for Christians to be well instructed in the grounds of religion: *if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled*---Two propositions.

*First*, It is the duty of Christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith.

*Second*, The best way for Christians to be settled, is to be well grounded.

**DOCT. I.** *That it is the duty of Christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith*: it is the apostle's prayer, 1 Pet. v. 10. *The God of all grace stablish, strengthen, settle you.* That they might not be meteors in the air, but fixed stars. The apostle Jude speaks of *wandering stars*, ver. 13. They are called wandering stars, because, as *Aristotle* saith, 'they do leap up and down, and wander into several parts of the heaven; and being but dry exhalations, not made of that pure celestial matter as the fixed stars are, they often fall to the earth.' Now such as are not settled in religion will at one time or other prove wandering stars, they will lose their former strictness, and wander from one opinion to another. Such as are unsettled are of the tribe of *Reuben, unstable as water*, Gen. xlix. 4. like a ship without ballast, overturned with every wind of doctrine. *Beza* writes of one *Belsæsius*, whose religion changed as the moon. The *Arians* had every year a new faith. These are not pillars in the temple of God, but reeds shaken every way. The apostle calls them *damnable heresies*, 2 Pet. ii. 1. A man may go to hell as well for heresy as adultery. To be unsettled in religion argues want of judgment: if their heads were not gid-

dy, they would not reel so fast from one opinion to another. It argues lightness: feathers will be blown every way; so will feathery Christians: *Triticum non rapit ventus, inanes palee jactantur*, Cypr. Therefore such are compared to children, Eph. iv. 14. *That we be no more children tossed to and fro.* Children are fickle, sometimes of one mind, sometimes of another; nothing pleases them long: so unsettled Christians are childish; those truths they embrace at one time, they reject at another; sometimes they like the protestant religion, and soon after they have a good mind to turn papists. Now that you may labour to be settled, (as *Ignatius*) in the faith, in unsettled times of settled judgments:

1. It is the great end of the word preached, to bring us to a settlement in religion: Eph. iv. 11. 13. *And he gave some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the edifying of the body of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children.* The word is called an hammer, Jer. xxiii. 29. Every blow of the hammer is to fasten the nails of the building; the preachers words are but to fasten you the more to Christ; they weaken themselves to strengthen and settle you. This is the grand design of preaching, not only for the enlightening, but for the establishing of souls; not only to guide them into the right way, but to keep them in it. Now, if you be not settled, you do not answer God's end in giving you the ministry.

2. To be settled in religion, is both a Christian's excellency and honour: it is his excellency; when the milk is settled, it turns to cream; now he will be something zealous for the truth, walk in close communion with God. And his honour, Prov. xvi. 31. *The hoary head*



is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. 'Tis one of the best sights, to see an old disciple; to see silver hairs adorned with golden virtues.

3. Such as are not settled in the faith, can never suffer for it: sceptics in religion will hardly ever prove martyrs; they that are not settled do hang in suspense; when they think of the joys of heaven, then they will espouse the gospel; but when they think of persecution, then they desert it. Unsettled Christians do not consult what is best, but what is safest: 'the apostate (saith *Tertullian*) seems to put God and Satan in balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master: and in this sense may be said to put Christ to open shame, *Heb. vi. 6.* They will never suffer for the truth, but be as a soldier that leaves his colours, and runs over to the enemy's side; he will fight on the devil's side for pay.

4. Not to be settled in the faith, is highly provoking to God: to espouse the truth, and then to fall away, brings an ill report upon the gospel, which will not go unpunished: *Psal. lxxviii. 57, 59. They turned back and dealt unfaithfully; when God heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.* The apostate drops as a wind-fall into the devil's mouth.

5. If ye are not settled in religion, you will never grow: we are commanded to grow up into the head Christ, *Eph. iv. 14.* But if we are unsettled, no growing: 'the plant which is continually removing never thrives.' He can no more grow in godliness, which is unsettled, than a bone can grow in the body that is out of joint.

6. What great need is there to be settled, because there are so many things to unsettle us, and make us fall away gradually from the truth. Seducers are abroad, whose work is to draw away people from the principles of religion, *1 John ii. 26. Those things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.* Seducers are the devil's factors; they are of all others the greatest felons, that would rob you of the truth: seducers have silver tongues, a fair tongue can put off bad wares; they have a slight to deceive, *Eph. iv. 14.* The Greek word there is taken from those that can cog a dye, and cast it for the best advantage: so seducers are impostors, they can cog a dye; they can so dissemble and sophisticate the truth, that they can deceive others. Now the stile by which seducers use to deceive, is,

1. By wisdom of words, *Rom. xvi. 18. By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.* They have fine elegant phrases, flattering language, whereby they work on the weaker sort; as being christed with Christ, and the light within them.

2. Another slight, is a pretence of extraordinary piety, that so people may admire them, and suck in their doctrine. They seem to be men of zeal and sanctity, and to be divinely inspired: they pretend revelations, as *Munster, Michael Servetus*, and other of the *Anabaptists* in Germany; tho' they were tainted with pride, lust and avarice.

3. A third slight or cheat seducers have, is a labouring to vilify and nullify sound orthodox teachers; they would eclipse those that bring the truth, like unto the black vapours that darken the light of heaven: they would defame others, that themselves may be more admired. Thus the false teachers cried down *Paul*, that they might be received, *Gal. iv. 17.*

4. The fourth slight or cheat of seducers, is by preaching doctrine of liberty: as the *Antinomian* preacheth, that men are freed from the moral law, the rule as well as the curse. He preacheth that Christ hath done all for them, and they need to do nothing. So he makes the doctrine of free grace a key to open the door to all licentiousness.

5. Another thing to unsettle Christians, is persecutors, *2 Tim. iii. 12.* The gospel is a rose cannot be plucked without prickles. The legacy Christ hath bequeathed is the Cross: while there is a devil and a wicked man in the world, never expect a charter of exemption from trouble; and how many fall away in an hour of persecution? *Rev. iii. 4. There appeared a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven:* the red dragon, the heathenish empire; and his tail, viz. his power and subtilty, drew away stars, viz. eminent professors, that seemed to shine as stars in the firmament of the church. Therefore we see what need there is to be settled in the truth, for fear the tail of the dragon cast us to the earth.

6. To be unsettled in good, is the sin of the devils, *Jude 6.* They are called morning stars, *Job xxxviii. 7.* but falling stars; they were holy, but mutable. As the vessel is overturned with the sail, so their sails being swelled with pride, were overturned, *1 Tim. iii. 6.* By unsettledness, who dost thou imitate but lapsed angels? The devil



devil was the first apostate. So much for the first proposition, that it is a great duty of Christians to be settled: the sons of *Sion* should be like *mount Sion*, which cannot be removed.

Second, The second proposition is, that the way for Christians to be settled, is to be well grounded: *if ye continue grounded and settled*. The Greek word for grounded, a metaphor, it alludes to a building that hath the foundation well laid; so Christians should be grounded in the essential points of religion, and have their foundation well laid.

Here let me speak to two things: 1. That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals. 2. That this grounding is the best way to settling.

(1.) That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals: the apostle speaks of the *first principles of the oracles of God*, Heb. v. 12. In all arts and sciences, logic, physic, mathematics, there are some *præcognita*, some rules and principles that must necessarily be known to the practice of those arts: so in divinity, there must be the first principles laid down: the knowledge of the grounds and principles of religion is exceeding useful.

1. Else we cannot serve God aright; we can never worship God acceptably, unless we worship him regularly; and how can we do that, if we are ignorant of the rules and elements of religion? We are bid to give God a reasonable service, *Rom. xii. 1*. If we understand not the grounds of religion, how can it be a reasonable service?

2. Knowledge of the grounds of religion much enricheth the mind: it is a lamp to our feet; it directs us in the whole course of christianity, as the eye directs the body. Knowledge of fundamentals is the golden key that opens the chief mysteries of religion; it gives us a whole system and body of divinity exactly drawn in all its lineaments and lively colours; it helps us to understand many of those difficult things, which do occur in the reading of the word; it helps to untie many scripture knots.

3. Armour of proof; it doth furnish us with weapons to fight against the adversaries of the truth.

4. It is the holy seed of which grace is formed: 'Tis *semen fidei*, the seed of faith, *Psal. ix. 10*. 'Tis *radix amoris*, the root of love, *Eph. iii. 17*. *Being rooted and grounded in love*. The knowledge of principles conduceth to the making of a complete Christian.

(2.) That this grounding is the best way to settling: grounded and settled. A tree, that it may be well settled, must be well rooted; so, if you be well settled in religion, you must be rooted in the principles of it. He, in *Plutarch*, set up a dead man, and he would not stand. O saith he, *there must be something within*: so that we may stand in shaking times, there must be a principle of knowledge within; first grounded, and then settled. That the ship may be kept from overturning, it must have its anchor fastned; knowledge of principles, is to the soul as the anchor to the ship, that holds it steady in the midst of all the rolling waves of error, or the violent winds of persecution. First grounded, and then settled.

USE I. See the reason why so many people are unsettled, ready to embrace every novel opinion, and dress themselves in as many religions as they do fashions; it is because they are ungrounded. See how the apostle joins these two together, *unlearned and unstable*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. Such as are unlearned in the main points of divinity, will be unstable. As the body cannot be strong that hath the sinews shrunk; so neither can that Christian be strong in religion, who wants the grounds of knowledge, which are the sinews to strengthen and stablish him.

USE II. See then what great necessity there is of laying down all the main grounds of religion in a way of catechise, that the weakest judgment may be instructed in the knowledge of the truth, and strengthened in the love of it; catechising is the best expedient for the grounding and settling of people. I fear, one reason why there hath been no more good done by preaching, hath been because the chief heads and articles in religion have not been explained in a catechistical way; catechising is the laying the foundation, *Heb. vi. 7*. to preach, and not to catechise, is to build without a foundation. This way of catechising is not novel, it is apostolical: the primitive church had their forms of catechism: so much those phrases imply, a *form of sound words*, 2 Tim. i. 13. and, *the first principles of the oracles of God*, *Heb. vi. 1*. And since the church had their *catechumenoi*, as *Grotius* and *Erasmus* observe; many of the ancient fathers have written for it, *Fulgentius*, *Austin*, *Theodoret*, *Lactantius*, and others. God hath given great success to it. By this laying down of grounds of religion cate-



chiftically, Christians have been clearly instructed and wondrously built up in the Christian faith, infomuch that *Julian* the apostate, seeing the great success of catechising, did put down all schools and places of public literature, and instructing of youth. It is my design therefore (with the blessing of God) to begin this work of catechising the next sabbath day; and I in-

tend every other sabbath in the afternoon, to make it my whole work to lay down the grounds and fundamentals of religion in a catechistical way. If I am hindred in this work by men, or taken away by death; I hope God will raise up some other labourer in the vineyard among you, that may perfect this work which I am now beginning.

MAN'S CHIEF END IS TO GLORIFY GOD.

Q. I. *WHAT is the chief end of man?*

*Ans.* Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

HERE are two ends of life specified, 1. The glorifying of God. 2. The enjoying of God.

*First*, I begin with the first, the glorifying of God. 1 *Pet.* iv. 11. *That God in all things may be glorified*; the glory of God is a silver-thread which must run through all our actions: 1 *Cor.* x. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Every thing works to some end in things natural and artificial; now man being a rational creature, must propose some end to himself, and that is, that he may lift up God in the world; and better lose his life, than lose the end of his living: so then, the great truth asserted is this, that the end of every man's living, is to glorify God; this is the yearly rent is paid to the crown of Heaven. Glorifying of God hath respect to all the persons in the Trinity; it respects God the father, who gave us our life; it respects God the son, who lost his life for us; it respects God the holy ghost, who produceth a new life in us: we must bring glory to the whole Trinity.

When we speak of God's glory, the question will be moved, *what are we to understand by God's glory?*

*Ans.* There is a twofold glory: 1. The glory that God hath in himself, his intrinsical glory. Glory is essential to the godhead, as light is to the sun: he is called the God of glory, *Acts* vii. 2. Glory is the sparkling of the deity; glory is so co-natural to the godhead, that God cannot be God without it. The creature's honour is not essential to his being; a king is a man without his regal ornaments, when his crown and royal robe are taken away: but God's glory is such an

essential part of his being, that he cannot be God without it: God's very life lies in his glory. This glory can receive no addition, because it is infinite; this glory is that which God is most tender of; and which he will not part with, *Isa.* xlviii. 8. *My glory I will not give to another.* God will give temporal blessings to his children, such as wisdom, riches, honour; he will give them spiritual blessings, he will give them grace, he will give them his love, he will give them heaven; but his essential glory he will not give to another. King *Pharaph* parted with a ring off his finger to *Joseph*, and a gold chain, but he would not part with his throne, *Gen.* xli. 40. *Only in the throne will I be greater than thou.* So God will do much for his people; he will give them the inheritance; he will put some of Christ's glory, as mediator, upon them: but his essential glory he will not part with; *in the throne he will be greater.*

2. The glory which is ascribed to God, or which his creatures labour to bring to him, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 29. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* And, 1 *Cor.* vi. 20. *Glorify God in your body and in your spirit.* The glory we give God, is nothing else but our lifting up his name in the world, and magnifying him in the eyes of others, *Phil.* i. 20. *Christ shall be magnified in my body.*

Qu. *What is it to glorify God, or wherein doth it consist?*

*Ans.* Glorifying of God consists in four things: (1.) Appretiation. (2.) Adoration. (3.) Affection. (4.) Subjection. This is the yearly rent we pay to the crown of Heaven.

1. Appretiation: to glorify God, is to set God highest in our thoughts, to have a venerable esteem of him, *Pf.* xcii. 8. *Thou Lord, art most high for evermore,* *Pf.* xcvi. *Thou art*



art exalted far above all gods. There is in God all that may draw forth both wonder and delight; there is in him a constellation of all beauties; he is *prima causa*, the original and spring-head of being, who sheds a glory upon the creature. This is to glorify God, when we are God-admirers; we admire God in his attributes, which are the glistering beams by which the divine nature shines forth; we admire him in his promises, which are the charter of free grace, and the spiritual cabinet where the pearl of price is hid; we admire God in the noble effects of his power and wisdom, *viz.* the making of the world; this is called *the work of his fingers*, Ps. viii. 3. such curious needle-work it was, that none but a God could work. This is to glorify God, to have God-admiring thoughts; we esteem him most excellent, and search for diamonds only in this rock.

2. Glorifying of God consists in adoration, or worship, Ps. xxix. 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* There is a two-fold worship: 1. A civil reverence we give to persons of honour, Gen. xxiii. 7. *Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the children of Heth:* piety is no enemy to courtesy. 2. A divine worship which we give to God, is his prerogative-royal; Neh. viii. 6. *They bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces towards the ground.* This divine worship God is very jealous of; this is the apple of his eye, this is the pearl of his crown, which he guards, as he did the tree of life, with cherubims and a flaming sword, that no man may come near it to violate it; divine worship must be such as God himself hath appointed, else it is *offering strange fire*, Levit. x. 2. The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle, *according to the pattern in the mount*, Exod. xxv. 40. he must not leave out any thing in the pattern, nor add to it. If God was so exact and curious about the place of his worship, how exact will he be about the manner of his worship? Surely here every thing must be according to the pattern prescribed in his word.

3. Affection: this is a part of the glory we give to God; God counts himself glorified when he is loved, Deut. vi. 5. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.* There is a two-fold love, 1. *Amar Concupiscentiæ*, a love of concupiscence, which is self-love, when we love another because he doth us a good turn: thus a wicked man may

be said to love God, because he hath given him a good crop, or filled his cup with wine; and to speak properly, this is rather to love God's blessing than to love God. 2. *Amar amicitiae*, a love of delight, as a man takes delight in a friend; this is indeed to love God; the heart is set upon God, as a man's heart is set upon his treasure. And this love is 1. Exuberant, not a few drops, but a stream. 2. It is superlative; we give God the best of our love, the cream of it, Cant. viii. 2. *I wou'd cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.* If the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ must drink of it. 3. It is intense and ardent; true saints are seraphims burning in holy love to God. The spouse was *amare percussa*, in fainting fits, *sick of love*, Cant. ii. 5. Thus to love God is to glorify him; he who is the chief of our happiness, hath the chief of our affections.

4. Subjection: when we dedicate ourselves to God, and stand ready prest for his service. Thus the angels in heaven glorify him; they wait on his throne, and are ready to take a commission from him; therefore they are resembled by the cherubims with their wings displayed, to shew how swift the angels are in their obedience. This is to glorify God, when we are devoted to his service; our head studies for God, our tongue pleads for him, our hands relieve his members: The wise men that came to Christ did not only bow the knee to him, but presented him with gold and myrrh, Mat. ii. 11. so we must not only bow the knee, give God worship, but bring presents, golden obedience. This is to glorify God, when we stick at no service; we will fight under the banner of his gospel against regiments, and we say to him as David to king Saul, 1 Sam. xvii. 32. *Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.* Thus you see wherein the glorifying of God doth consist, in appreciation, adoration, affection, subjection.

A good christian is like the sun, which doth not only send forth heat, but goes its circuit round the world; thus he who glorifies God, hath not only his affections heated with love to God, but he goes his circuit too; he moves vigorously in the sphere of obedience.

Q. *Why must we glorify God?*

Ans. 1. Because he gives us our being, Ps. c. 3. *It is he that hath made us.* We think it a great kindness in a man to spare our life, but what kindness is it in God to give us our



life? We draw our breath from him; and as life, so all the comforts of life are from God: he gives us health, which is the sauce to sweeten our life; he gives us food, which is the oil that nourisheth the lamp of life: now if all we receive is from the hand of his bounty, is it not good reason we should glorify him and live to him, seeing we live by him? *Rom. xi. 36. For of him and through him are all things.* Of him are all, all we have is of his fulness; through him are all, all we have is through his free grace; and therefore to him should be all: so it follows, *To him be glory for ever*; God is not only our benefactor, but our founder; the rivers come from the sea, and they empty their silver streams into the sea again.

2. Because God hath made all things for his own glory, *Prov. xvi. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself; that is, for his glory.* As a king hath excise out of commodities, God will have his glory out of every thing: he will have glory out of the wicked, the glory of his justice; they will not give him glory, but he will get his glory upon them, *Exod. xiv. 17. I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.* But especially he hath made the godly for his glory, they are the lively organs of his praise, *Isa. xliii. 21. This people have I formed for myself, and they shall shew forth my praise.* It is true, they cannot add to his glory, but they may exalt it; they cannot raise him in heaven, but they may raise him in the esteem of others. God hath adopted the saints into his family, and made them a royal priesthood, that they should shew forth the praises of him who hath called them, *1 Pet. ii. 9.*

3. Because the glory of God hath so much intrinsic value and excellency in it; it transcends the thoughts of men and the tongue of angels. God's glory is his treasure, all his riches ly here; as *Micah said, Judg. xviii. 24. What have I more?* So of God, what hath God more; God's glory is more worth than heaven, *more worth than the salvation of all mens souls*; better kingdoms be thrown down, better men and angels be annihilated, than God should lose one jewel of his crown, one beam of his glory.

4. Creatures below us and above us bring glory to God, and do we think to sit rent-free? Shall every thing glorify God, but man? It is pity then that ever man was made! (1.) Creatures below us glorify God, the inanimate creatures: the heavens glorify God, *Psal. xix. 1. The heavens declare the glory of God.* The

curious workmanship of heaven sets forth the glory of its maker; the firmament is beautified and penciled out in blue and azure colours, where the power and wisdom of God may be clearly seen. *The heavens declare his glory*: we may see the glory of God, blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. 2. Look into the air, the birds with their chirping music, sing hymns of praise to God saith *Anselm.* Every beast doth in its kind glorify God, *Isa. xliii. 20. The beasts of the field shall honour me.* (2.) Creatures above us glorify God: *the angels are ministering spirits*, *Heb. i. 14.* They are still waiting on God's throne, and bring some revenues of glory into the exchequer of heaven: then surely man should be much more studious of God's glory than the angels, for God hath honoured him more than the angels, in that Christ took man's nature upon him, and not the angels: say, though in regard of creation, God hath made man a little lower than the angels, *Heb. ii. 7.* yet in regard of redemption, God hath set him higher than the angels; he hath married mankind to himself: the angels are Christ's friends, but not his spouse; he hath covered us with the purple robe of his righteousness, which is a better righteousness than the angels have, *2 Cor. v. 20.* So that if the angels bring glory to God, much more should we, being dignified with honour above the angelical spirits.

5. *Ans.* We must bring glory to God, because all our hopes hang upon him, *Psal. xxxix. 7. My hope is in thee.* And *Psal. lxxii. 5. My expectation is from him*; I expect a kingdom from him. A child that is good-natur'd will honour his parent, as expecting all that ever he is like to be worth from him, *Psal. lxxxvii. 8. All my fresh springs are in thee.* The silver springs of grace, the golden springs of glory.

Q. *How many ways may we glorify God?*

*Ans.* (1.) It is a glorifying God, when we aim purely at God's glory; it is one thing to advance God's glory, another thing to aim at it. God must be the *Terminus ad quem*, the ultimate end of all actions. Thus Christ, *John viii. 50. I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him that sent me.* 'Tis the note of an hypocrite, he hath a squint eye, he looks more to his own glory than God's glory. Our Saviour decyphers such, and gives a caveat against them, *Matth. vi. 2. When thou givest alms, do not sound a trumpet*: a stranger would ask, *What means the noise of this trumpet?* Then it was answered, *they are going to give to the poor.*



poor. And so they did not give alms, but sell them for honour and applause, that they may have glory of men: the breath of men was the wind that blew the sails of their charity: *verily, they have their reward.* The hypocrite may make his acquittance and write, *received in full payment.* Chrysostom calls vain-glory one of the devil's great nets to catch men. And Cyprian says, 'whom Satan cannot prevail against by intemperance, those he prevails against by pride and vain-glory.' O let us take heed of self-worshipping! aim purely at God's glory.

Q. How shall we know we aim at God's glory?

Ans. 1. When we prefer God's glory above all other things; above credit, estate, relations; when the glory of God comes in competition with them, we prefer his glory before them. If relations ly in our way to heaven, we must either leap over them, or tread upon them: a child must unchild himself, and forget he is a child; he must know neither father nor mother in God's cause, *Deut. xxxiii. 9. Who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren.* This is to aim at God's glory.

2. Then we aim at God's glory, when we can be content that God's will should take place, though it cross ours: Lord, I am content to be a loser, if thou be a gainer; to have less health, if I have more grace, and thou more glory; whether it be food or bitter physic thou givest me, Lord I desire that which may be most for thy glory: thus our blessed Saviour, *not as I will, but as thou wilt, Mat. xxvi. 39.* So God might have more glory by his sufferings, he was content to suffer, *John xii. 28. Father, glorify thy name.*

3. Then we aim at God's glory, when we can be content to be out-shined by others in gifts and esteem, so God's glory may be increased: a man that hath God in his heart, and God's glory in his eye, desires that God should be exalted; and if this be effected, let who will be the instrument, he rejoiceth, *Phil. i. 15. Some preach Christ of envy; notwithstanding Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice; they preached Christ of envy, they envied Paul that concourse of people, and they preached that they might outshine him in gifts, and get away some of his hearers: well, saith Paul, Christ is preached, and God is like to have glory, therefore I rejoice; let my candle go out, if the sun of righteousness may but shine.*

(2.) We glorify God by an ingenuous confession of sin: the thief on the cross had dishonoured God in his life, but at his death he brings glory to God by confession of sin, *Luke xxiii. 41. We indeed suffer justly.* He acknowledged he deserved not only crucifixion, but damnation, *Josb. vii. 19. My son, give, I pray thee, glory to God, and make confession unto him.* An humble confession exalts God: how is God's free-grace magnified in crowning those who deserve to be condemned! as the excusing and mincing of sin doth cast a reproach upon God. Adam denies not he did taste the forbidden fruit, but, instead of a full confession, he taxes God, *Gen. iii. 12. The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* It is long of thee, if thou hadst not given me the woman to be a tempter, I had not sinned. So confession glorifies God, it clears, it acknowledgeth he is holy and righteous, whatever he doth. *Nehemiah vindicates God's righteousness, ch. ix. 33. Thou art just in all that is brought upon us.* And confession then is ingenuous, when it is free, not forced, *Luke xv. 18. I have sinned against heaven and before thee; he chargeth himself with sin before ever his father chargeth him with it.*

(3.) We glorify God by believing; *Rom. iv. 20. Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* Unbelief affronts God; it gives him the lie; *he that believeth not, maketh God a liar, 1 John v. 10.* So faith brings glory to God, it sets to its seal that God is true, *John iii. 33. He that believes, lies to God's mercy and truth, as to an altar of refuge; he doth ingarison himself in the promises, he trusts all he hath with God, Ps. xxxi. 5. Into thy hands I commit my spirit: this is a great way of bringing glory to God, therefore God honours faith, because faith honours God. It is a great honour we do to a man, when we trust him with all we have, we put our lives and estates into his hand; a sign we have a good opinion of him. The three children glorified God by believing, The God whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and will deliver us, Dan. iii. 17. Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God, and will trust him where it cannot trace him.*

(4.) We glorify God, by being tender of God's glory; God's glory is dear to him, as the apple of his eye: now when we are tender of his glory, by laying to heart his dishonours, this is a glorifying of him. An ingenuous child weeps to see a disgrace done to his



his father, *Pf. lxxix. 9. The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me.* When we hear God reproached, it is as if we were reproached; when God's glory suffers, it is as if we suffered. This is to be tender of God's glory.

(5.) We glorify God by fruitfulness, *John xv. 8. Hereby is my father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.* As it is a dishonour to God to be barren, so fruitfulness doth honour him: *Phil. i. 11. Filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory.* We must not be like the fig-tree in the gospel, which had nothing but leaves, but like the Pomocitron, that is continually either mellowing or blossoming, it is never without fruit. It is not profession, but fruit glorifies God; God expects to have his glory from us this way, *1 Cor. ix. 7. Who planteth a vine-yard, and eateth not of the fruit of it?* Trees in the forest may be barren, but trees in the garden are fruitful: we must bring forth the fruits of love and good works, *Mat. v. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.* Faith doth sanctify our works, and works do testify our faith: to be doing good to others, to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; doth much glorify God. And thus Christ did glorify his father, *he went about doing good, Acts x. 38.* By being fruitful, we are fair in God's eyes, *Jer. xi. 16. The Lord called thy name a green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit.* And we must bear much fruit, it is muchness of fruit glorifies God; *if ye bear much fruit.* The spouse's breasts are compared to clusters of grapes, *Cant. vii. 7.* to shew how fertile she was. Though the lowest degree of grace may bring salvation to you, yet not so much glory to God; it was not a spark of love Christ commended in Mary, but much love, *she loved much, Luke vii. 47.*

(6.) We glorify God, by being contented in that state where his providence hath set us; we give God the glory of his wisdom, in that we rest satisfied with what he carves out to us: Thus did holy Paul glorify God; the Lord did cast him into as great variety of condition as any man, *in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, 2 Cor. xi. 23.* yet he had learned to be content: St. Paul could sail either in a storm or a calm; he could be any thing that God would have him; he could either want or abound, *Phil. iv. 13.* A good Christian argues thus; It is God that hath put me in this con-

dition; he could have raised me higher if he pleased, but that might have been a snare to me; God hath done it in wisdom and love, therefore I will sit down satisfied with my condition. Surely this doth much glorify God; God counts himself much honoured by such a Christian: saith God, Here is one after my own heart; let me do what I will with him, I hear no murmuring, he is content: this shews abundance of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to be content; but when grace is conflicting with inconveniencies, then to be content, is a glorious thing indeed: for one to be content when he is in heaven, is no wonder; but to be content under the cross, is like a Christian: this man must needs bring glory to God; for he shews to all the world, that though he hath little meal in barrel, yet he hath enough in God to make him content: he saith as David, *Pf. xvi. 5. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places.*

(7.) We glorify God in working out our own salvation: God hath twisted these two together, his glory and our good; we glorify him by promoting our own salvation: it is a glory to God to have multitude of converts; now his design of free grace takes, and God hath the glory of his mercy: so that while we are endeavouring our salvation, we are honouring God. What an encouragement is this to the service of God, to think while I am hearing and praying, I am glorifying God; while I am furthering my own glory in heaven, I am encreasing God's glory? Would it not be an encouragement to a subject, to hear his prince say to him, You will honour and please me very much, if you will go to yonder mine of gold, and dig out as much gold for yourself as you can carry away? So for God to say, Go to the ordinances, get as much grace as you can, dig out as much salvation as you can; and the more happiness you have, the more I shall count my self glorified.

(8.) We glorify God by living to God, *2 Cor. v. 15. that they which live, should not live to themselves, but unto him who died for them.* Rom. xiv. 8. *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord.* The Mammonist lives to his money, the Epicure lives to his belly; the design of a sinner's life is to gratify lust. But then we glorify God, when we live to God.

Qu. *What is it to live to God?*

Ans. When we live to his service, and lay out



out ourselves wholly for God: the Lord hath sent us into the world, as a merchant sends his factor beyond the seas to trade for him: then we live to God when we trade for his interest, and propagate his gospel. God hath given every man a talent; now, when he doth not hide it in a napkin, but improves it for God, this is to live to God. When a master in a family, by counsel and good example, labours to bring his servants to Christ; when a minister doth exhaust himself in the labours of his holy calling, when he spends himself and is spent, that he may win souls to Christ, and make the crown flourish upon Christ's head; when the magistrate doth not wear the sword in vain, but labours to cut down sin, and suppress vice; this is to live to God, and this is a glorifying of God: *Phil. i. 20. That Christ might be magnified, whether by life or by death.* Three wishes St. Paul had, and they were all about Christ, that he may be found in Christ, be with Christ, and that he might magnify Christ.

(9.) We glorify God by walking cheerfully. It is a glory to God, when the world sees a Christian hath that within him, that can make him cheerful in the worst times: he can with the nightingale, sing with a thorn at his breast. The people of God have ground of cheerfulness, they are justified, and instated into adoption, and this creates inward peace; it makes music within, whatever storms are without, 2 *Cor. i. 4. 1 Thess. i. 6* if we consider what Christ hath wrought for us by his blood, and wrought in us by his spirit, it is a ground of great cheerfulness; and this cheerfulness glorifies God. It reflects upon a master when the servant is always drooping and sad, sure he is kept to hard commons, his master doth not give him what is fitting: so when God's people hang their harps on willows, sure they do not serve a good master, repent of their choice; this reflects dishonour on God. As the gross sins of the wicked bring a scandal on the gospel, so do the uncheerful lives of the godly, *Pf. c. 2. Serve the Lord with gladness.* Your serving him doth not glorify him, unless it be with gladness. A Christian's cheerful looks glorify God; religion doth not take away our joy, but refine and clarify it; it doth not break our viol, but tunes it, and makes the music sweeter.

(10.) We glorify God, by standing up for his truths: Much of God's glory lies in his truth; God hath intrusted us with his truth, as a master intrusts his servant with his purse to keep.

We have not a richer jewel to trust God with, than our souls; nor God hath not a richer jewel to trust us with, than his truth: truth is a beam that shines from God, much of his glory lies in his truth: now, when we are advocates for truth, this is to glorify God; so *Athanasius*, the bulwark of truth. *Jude 3. That ye should contend earnestly for the truth; viz. the doctrine of faith.* The Greek word to contend; signifies a great contending, as one would contend for his land, and not suffer his right to be taken from him; so we should contend for the truth: were there more of this holy contention, God would have more glory. Some can contend earnestly for trifles and ceremonies, but not for the truth: we should count him indifferent, that should contend more for a picture, than for his land of inheritance; for a box of counters, than for his box of evidences.

(11.) We glorify God by praising of him. Doxology, or praise, is a God-exalting work: *Psal. l. 23. Whose offering praise glorifieth me.* The Hebrew word *Bara* to create, and *Barak* to praise, are little different, because the end of creation is to praise God: *David* was called the sweet-singer of *Israel*, and his praising God was called a glorifying of God, *Pf. lxxxvi. 12. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, and I will glorify thy name.* Tho' nothing can add to God's essential glory, yet praise exalts him in the eyes of others: when we praise God, we spread his fame and renown, we display the trophies of his excellency: in this manner the angels glorify God, and they are the choirs of heaven, and do trumpet forth God's praise. And praising of God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion; in prayer we act like men, in praise we act like angels; this is an high degree of glorifying God. Believers are called temples of God, 1 *Cor. iii. 16.* When our tongues praise, then the organs in God's spiritual Temple are going. How sad is it, that God hath no more of his glory from us this way! many are full of murmurings and discontents, but seldom do they bring glory to God by giving him the praise due to his name. We read of the saints having harps in their hand. *Rev. v. 8.* the emblem of praise: many have tears in their eyes, and complaints in their mouth, but few have harps in their hand, blessing and glorifying of God: let us honour God this way. Praise is the quit-rent we pay to God; while God renews our lease, we must renew our rent.



(12.) We glorify God by being zealous for his name, *Num. xxv. 11. Phinehas hath turned my wrath away, while he was zealous for my sake.* Zeal is a mixed affection, a compound of love and anger; it carries forth our love to God, and anger against sin in a most intense manner: Zeal is impatient of God's dishonour; a Christian fired with zeal, takes a dishonour done to God, worse than an injury done to himself: *Rev. ii. 2. Thou canst not bear them that are evil.* Our Saviour Christ did thus glorify his Father: he, being baptized with a spirit of zeal, drove the money-changers out of the temple, *John ii. 14, 17. The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*

(13.) We glorify God, when we have an eye at God, both in our natural and in our civil actions. 1. In our natural actions; in eating and drinking, *1 Cor. x. 31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.* A gracious person holds the golden bridle of temperance; he takes his meat as a medicine to heal the decays of nature, and that he may be the fitter by the strength he receives, for the service of God; he makes his food, not fuel for lust, but help to duty. 2. In buying and selling, we do all to the glory of God. The wicked live upon unjust gain, either by falsifying the balance, *Hos. xii. 7. The balances of deceit are in his hands:* While men make their weights lighter, they make their sins heavier; or, by exacting more than the commodity is worth, they do not for fourscore write down fifty, but for fifty, fourscore; they exact double the price that a thing is worth: but then we buy and sell to the glory of God, when, in our buying and selling, we observe that golden maxim, *To do to others, as we would have them do to us,* *Mat. vii. 12.* When we do sell our commodities, that we do not sell our conscience, *Acts xxiv. 16. Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.* This is to glorify God, when we have an eye at God in all our civil and natural actions, and will do nothing that may reflect any blemish on religion.

(14.) We glorify God by labouring to draw others to God; we convert others, and so make them instruments of glorifying God. We should be both diamonds and loadstones; diamonds for the lustre of grace, and loadstones for our attractive virtue in drawing others to Christ; *Gal. iv. 19. My little children, of whom I travel, &c.* This is a great way of glorifying God,

when we break the devil's prison, and turn men from the power of Satan to God.

(15.) We glorify God in an high manner, when we suffer for God, and seal the gospel with our blood; *John xxi. 18, 19. When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not: this spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* God's glory shines in the ashes of his martyrs, *Isa. xxiv. 15. Wherefore glorify the Lord in fires.* *Micaiah* was in the prison, *Isaiah* was sawn asunder, *Paul* beheaded, *Luke* hanged on an olive-tree; thus did they by their death glorify God. The sufferings of the primitive saints did honour God, and make the gospel famous in the world: what would others say? See what a good master they serve, and how they love him, that they will venture loss of all in his service. The glory of Christ's kingdom doth not stand in worldly pomp and grandeur, as other kings; but it is seen in the cheerful sufferings of his people: the saints of old loved not their lives to the death, *Rev. xii. 11.* They snatched up torments as so many crowns. God grant we may thus glorify him, if he calls us to it. Many pray, *Let this cup pass away,* but not, *Thy will be done.*

(16.) We glorify God, when we give God the glory of all we do. *Herod*, when he had made an oration, and the people gave a shout saying, *It is the voice of a God and not of a man:* And he took this glory to himself, the text saith, *Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms,* *Acts xii. 23.* Then we glorify God, when we sacrifice the praise and glory of all to God, *1 Cor. xv. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all.* A speech one would think, favoured of pride; but the apostle pulls the crown from his own head, and sets it upon the head of free grace, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. As *Joab*, when he fought against *Rabbah*, sent for king *David*, that he might carry away the crown of the victory. *2 Sam. xii. 28.* so a Christian when he hath gotten power over any corruption or temptation, sends for Christ, that he may carry away the crown of the victory; as the silk-worm, when she weaves her curious work, she hides herself under the silk, and is not seen; so when we have done any thing praiseworthy, we must hide ourselves under the veil of humility, and transfer the glory of all we have done to God. *Constantine* did use to write the name



name of Christ over his door, so should we write the name of Christ over our duties; let him wear the garland of praise.

(17.) We glorify God by an holy life: As a bad life doth dishonour God, *1 Pet. ii. 9. Ye are an holy nation, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you.* *Rom. ii. 24. The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* Epiphanius saith, 'That the looseness of some Christians, in his time, made many of the heathen shun the company of the Christians, and would not be drawn to hear their sermons.' So, by our exact bible conversation we glorify God. Tho' the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet our light must so shine, that others may behold it; the chief of building is in foundation, yet the glory of it is in frontispiece, so beauty in the conversation: when the saints, who are called jewels, cast a sparkling lustre of holiness in the eyes of the world; then they walk as Christ walked, *1 John ii. 6.* when they live as if they had seen the Lord with bodily eyes, and been with him upon the mount; then they adorn religion, and bring revenues of glory to the crown of heaven.

Use 1. It shews us what should not be our chief end, not to get great estates, not to lay up treasures upon earth; this is the degeneracy of mankind since the fall, their great design is to compass the earth, and grow rich; and this they make their chief end: those never think of glorifying God, they trade for the world but are not factors for heaven: *Eccles. ix. 3. Madness is in their heart while they live.* Sometimes they never arrive at an estate, they do not get the venison they hunt for; or tho' they do, what have they? that which will not fill the heart, no more than the mariners breath will fill the sails of a ship; like a picture drawn on the ice, and to spend all one's time as *Israel* in gathering straw, but remember not the end of living to glorify God: *Eccles. v. 16. What profit hath he that laboured for the wind?* And these things are soon gone.

Use 2. It reproves such, 1. As bring no glory to God: They do not answer the end of their creation, their time is not true lived, but time lost; they are like the wood of the vine, *Ezek. xv. 2.* Their lives are, as *St. Bernard* speaks, 'Either sinfulness or barrenness. An useless burden on the earth.' God will one day ask such a question as king *Abasuerus* did, *Esther vi. 3. What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai?* So will the Lord say, What

honour hath been done to me? What revenues of glory have you brought into my exchequer? There is none here present, but God hath put you in some capacity of glorifying him; the health he hath given you, the parts, estate, seasons of grace, these all are opportunities put into your hand to glorify him; and, be assur'd God will call you to account, to know what you have done with the mercies he hath intrusted you with, what glory you have brought to him. The parable of the talents, *Mat. xxv. 15.* where the man with the five talents, and he two talents are brought to a reckoning, doth evidently shew that God will call you to a strict account to know how you have traded with your talents, and what glory you have brought to him. Now, how sad will it be with them that hide their talents in a napkin, that bring God no glory at all? *Verse 30. Cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness.* It is not enough for you to say, that you have not dishonoured God, you have not lived in gross sin; but what good have you done? what glory have you brought to God? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard that he doth no hurt in the vineyard, he doth not break the trees or destroy the hedges; if he doth not do service in the vineyard, he loseth his pay; if you do not good in your place, not glorify God, you will lose your pay, miss of salvation. Oh think of this, all you that live unserviceably! Christ cursed the barren fig-tree.

2. It reproves such as are so far from bringing glory to God, that they rob God of his glory, *Mal. iii. 8. Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me.* They rob God, who take the glory due to God to themselves. 1. If they have gotten an estate, they ascribe all to their own wit and industry, they set the crown upon their own head, not considering that, *Deut. viii. 18. Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.* 2. If they do any duty of religion, they look a squint to their own glory, *Mat. vi. 5. That they may be seen of men;* That they may be set upon a theatre, that others may admire and canonize them. The oil of vain glory feeds their lamp. How many hath the wind of popular breath blown to hell? Whom the devil could not destroy by intemperance, he hath by vain-glory.

3. It reproves them who fight against God's glory, *Acts v. 29. Lest ye be found to fight against God.*



*Qu. But who do fight against God's glory?*

*Ans.* Such as do oppose that, whereby God's glory is promoted: God's glory is much promoted in the preaching of the word, because it is his engine whereby he converts souls. Now such as would hinder the preaching of the word, these fight against God's glory, 1 *Thes.* ii. 16. *Forbidding us to speak to the gentiles, that they might be saved:* Dioclesian, who raised the 10th persecution against the Christians, did prohibit church-meetings, and would have the temples of the Christians to be raz'd down: Such as hinder preaching, do as the *Philistines* that stop the wells, they stop the well of the water of life; they take away the physicians that should heal sin-sick souls: ministers are lights, *Mat.* v. 14. and who but thieves hate the light? these persons do directly strike at God's glory; and what an account will they have to give to God, when he shall charge the blood of men's souls upon them? *Luke* xi. 52. *ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.* If there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, they shall not go unpunished.

*Use* 4. Exhortation, let us every one in our place make this our chief end and design to glorify God. 1. Let me speak to magistrates; God hath put much glory upon them, *Pf.* lxxxii. 6. *I have said, ye are gods;* and will they not glorify him whom he hath put so much glory upon? Magistrates should be zealous for God's worship and day; they should not let the sword rust in the scabbard, but draw it out for the cutting down of sin. 2. Ministers, how should they study to promote God's glory; God hath intrusted them with two of the most precious things, his truths and the souls of his people. Ministers are by virtue of their office to glorify God: 1. They must glorify God, by labouring in the word and doctrine; 2. *Tim.* iv. 1. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, &c.* It was *Augustine's* wish, "that Christ at his coming, might find him either praying or preaching." 2. Ministers must glorify God by their zeal and sanctity. The priests under the law before they served at the altar, did wash in the laver: such as serve in the Lord's house, must first be washed from gross sin in the laver of repentance. 'Tis matter of grief and shame, to think how many, who call themselves mini-

sters, do, instead of apparently bringing glory to God, dishonour God, 2 *Chron.* xi. 15. Their lives as well as doctrines are heterodox, they are not free from the sins which they reprove in others. *Plutarch's* servant upbraided him, *It is not as my master Plutarch saith; he hath written a book against wrath, anger, & ipse mihi irascitur, yet he falls into a passion of anger with me:* So this minister preacheth against drunkenness, yet he will be drunk; he preacheth against swearing, yet he will swear: this reproacheth God, and makes the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. 3. Masters of families, do ye glorify God, season your children and servants with the knowledge of the Lord; your houses should be little churches, *Gen.* xviii. 19. *I know that Abraham will command his children that they may keep the way of the Lord.* You that are masters know you have a charge of souls under you; for want of the bridle of family discipline youth runs wild: well let me lay down some motives to glorify God.

1 *Mot.* It will be a great comfort in a dying hour, to think we have glorified God in our lives; it was Christ's comfort before his death, *John* xvii. 3. *I have glorified thee on earth.* At the hour of death all your earthly comforts will vanish: if you think how rich you have been, what pleasures you have had on earth; this will be so far from comforting you, that it will but torment you the more: what is one the better for an estate that is spent? But now to have conscience telling you, that you have glorify'd God on earth, what sweet comfort and peace will this let in to your soul! how will this make you long for death! the servant that hath been all day working in the vineyard, longs till evening comes when he shall receive his pay. They who have lived, and brought no glory to God, how can they think of dying with comfort? They cannot expect an harvest, they never sowed any seed: how can they expect glory from God, that never brought any glory to him? O in what horror will they be at death! the worm of conscience will gnaw their souls, before the worms are gnawing their bodies.

2 *Mot.* If we glorify God, he will glorify our souls for ever; by raising God's glory, we increase our own: by glorifying God, we come at last to the blessed enjoying of him. And that brings me to the 2d, *the enjoying of God.*

2dly, Man's chief end is to enjoy God for ever, *Pf.* lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee?*

That



That is, What is there in heaven I desire to enjoy but thee? There is a two-fold fruition, or enjoying of God; the one is in this life, the other in the life to come.

1st. *An enjoying of God here in this life:* The enjoying of God's presence; it is a great matter to enjoy God's ordinances (a mercy that some do envy us) but to enjoy God's presence in the ordinances, is that which a gracious heart aspires after, *Pf. lxxiii. 2. To see thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* This sweet enjoying of God is, when we feel his spirit co-operating with the ordinance; and distilling grace upon our hearts: 1. When in the word the spirit doth quicken and raise the affections, *Luke xxiv. 32. Did not our hearts burn within us?* 2. When the spirit doth transform the heart, leaving an impress of holiness upon it, *2 Cor. iii. 8. We are changed into the same image from glory to glory.* When the spirit doth revive the heart with comfort; it comes not only with its anointing, but its seal; it sheds God's love abroad in the heart, *Rom. v. 5. This is to enjoy God in an ordinance, 1 John i. 3. Our fellowship is with the father, and with his son Jesus Christ.* In the word we hear God's voice, and in the sacrament we have his kiss; this is enjoying of God: and what infinite content doth a gracious soul find in this! the heart being warmed and inflamed in a duty, this is God's answering by fire.

When a Christian hath the sweet illapses of God's spirit, these are the first-fruits of glory, when God comes down to the soul in an ordinance: now Christ hath pulled off his vail, and showed his smiling face; now he hath led a believer into the banqueting-house, and given him of the spiced wine of his love to drink; he hath put in his finger at the hole of the door, he hath touched the heart, and made it leap for joy: O how sweet is it thus to enjoy God! the godly have, in the use of the ordinances, had such divine raptures of joy, and soul-transfigurations, that they have been carried above the world, and despised all things here below.

*Use 1.* Is the enjoying of God in this life so sweet? How prodigiously wicked are they that prefer the enjoying of their lusts before the enjoying of God! *2 Pet. iii. 3. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life,* is the Trinity they worship: lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to that which is evil; there is the re-

vengeful lust, and the wanton lust: lust is like a feverish heat, it puts the soul into a flame. *Aristotle* calls sensual lusts brutish, because, when any lust is violent, reason or conscience cannot be heard, the beast rides the man: these lusts, when they are enjoyed, do beset and dispirit persons, *Hos. iv. 11. Idleness and wine take away the heart;* they have no heart for any thing that is good. How many make it their chief end, not to enjoy God, but to enjoy their lusts; as that cardinal said, 'Let him but keep his cardinalship of Paris, and he was content to lose his part in Paradise.' Lust first bewitcheth with pleasure, and then comes the fatal dart, *Prov. vii. 23. Till a dart strike through his liver.* This should be as a flaming sword to stop men in the way of their carnal delights. Who would for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath?

*Use 2.* Let it be our great care to enjoy God's sweet presence here, which is the beauty and comfort of the ordinances. Enjoying spiritual communion with God, is a riddle and mystery to most people; every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the king. We may approach to God in ordinances, and as it were hang about the court of heaven, yet not enjoy communion with God: we may have the letter without the spirit, the visible sign without the invisible grace: it is the enjoying of God in a duty we should chiefly look at, *Pf. xlii. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.* Alas! what are all our worldly enjoyments without the enjoying of God? What is it to enjoy a great deal of health, a brave estate, and not to enjoy God? *Job. xxx. 28. I went mourning without the sun.* So mayst thou say in the enjoyment of all creatures without God, *I went mourning without the sun.* I have the star-light of outward enjoyments, but I cannot enjoy God, I want the sun of righteousness, *I went mourning without the sun.* This should be our great design not only to have the ordinances of God, but the God of the ordinances: the enjoying God's sweet presence with us here, is the most contented life: he is an hive of sweetness, a magazine of riches, a fountain of delight, *Pf. xxxvi. 8, 9.* The higher the lark flies, the sweeter it sings; and the higher we fly by the wing of faith, the more of God we enjoy, the sweeter delight we feel in our souls. How is the heart inflamed in prayer and meditation? What joy and peace in believing? Is it not comfortable being in heaven?



He that enjoys much of God in this life, carries heaven about him : O let this be the thing we are chiefly ambitious of, the enjoying of God in his ordinances; remember, the enjoying of God's sweet presence here, is an earnest of our enjoying him in heaven.

And that brings me to the 2d. thing, viz.

2d. *The enjoying of God in the life to come :* Man's chief end is to enjoy God for ever. Before this plenary fruition of God in heaven, there must be something previous and antecedent, and that is, our being in a state of grace : We must have conformity to him in grace, before we can have communion with him in glory; grace and glory are link'd and chain'd together; grace preceeds glory, as the morning-star ushers in the sun. God will have us qualified and fitted for a state of blessedness : drunkards and swearers are not fit to enjoy God in glory; the Lord will not lay such vipers in his bosom; only the *pure in heart shall see God* : we must first be as the king's daughter, glorious within, before we are clothed with the robes of glory. As king *Ahasuerus* first caused the virgins to be purified and anointed, and they had their sweet odours to perfume them, and then they went to stand before the king, *Est. ii. 12.* so must we, we must have the anointing of God, and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet odours, and then we shall stand before the king of him : now, being thus divinely qualified by grace, we shall be taken up to the mount of vision, and enjoy God for ever : this enjoying God for ever, is nothing else but to be put to a state of happiness. As the body cannot have life, but by having communion with the soul; so the soul cannot have blessedness, but by having immediate communion with God. God is the *Summum Bonum*, the chief good; therefore the enjoying of him is the highest felicity; He is, I say, the chief good.

1. He is an universal good; *Bonum in quo omnia bona*, 'A good, in which are all goods.' The excellencies of the creature are limited. A man may have health, not beauty; learning, not parentage; riches, not wisdom : but in God are eminently contained all excellencies : He is a good commensurate fully to the soul; he is a sun, a portion, an horn of salvation; in him dwells *all fulness*, *Col. i. 19.* 2. God is an unmixed good : no condition in this life but hath its mixture; for every drop of honey there is a drop of gall. *Solomon*, who

gave himself to find out this philosopher's stone, to search out for an happiness here below, he found vanity and vexation, *Ecc. i. 2.* But God is a perfect, quintessential good. He is sweetness in the flower. 3. God is a satisfying good. The soul cries out, I have enough, *Psal. xvii. 15.* *I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.* A man that is thirsty, bring him to the ocean, and he hath enough. If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure enough to satisfy us. The soul is but finite, but God is an increase infinite good. And yet tho' God be such a good as doth satisfy, yet not surfeit. Fresh joys spring continually from God's face; and God is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls, as at the first moment. There is so much fulness in God as satisfies, yet so much sweetness, that the soul still desires; it is satisfaction without surfeit. 4. God is a delicious good. That which is the chief good must ravish the soul with pleasure; there must be in it spirits of delight and quintessence of joy; and this is to be enjoyed only in God. *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, immo rapitur.* The love of God drops such infinite suavity into the soul as is unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in God, when we see him only by faith, *1 Pet. i. 8.* what will the joy of vision be, when we shall see him face to face? If the saints have found so much delight in God while they were suffering, O then what joy and delight will they have when they are crowning! If flames are beds of roses, O then, what will it be to lean on the bosom of Jesus! what a bed of roses will that be! 5. God is a superlative good. He is better than any thing you can put in competition with him; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things maintain life, he gives life. But who would go to put any thing in balance with the Deity? who would weigh a feather with a mountain of gold? God excels all other things more infinitely than the sun the light of a taper. 6. God is an eternal good. He is the ancient of days, *Dan. vii. 9.* yet never decays, nor waxes old. The joy he gives is eternal, the crown he gives fadeeth not away, *1 Pet. v. 4.* The glorified soul shall be ever solacing itself in God; it shall be feasting on his love and sunning itself in the light of his countenance. We read of the river of pleasure at God's right hand; but will not this in time be dried up? No, there is a fountain at the bottom which feeds it. *Psal. xxxvi. 9.* *With the*



*the Lord is the fountain of life.* Thus God is the chief good; and the enjoying God for ever is the supreme felicity the soul is capable of.

1. *Use of exhortation.* Let it be the chief end of our living to enjoy this chief good hereafter; this is that will crown us with happiness. *Austin* reckons up 288 opinions among the philosophers about happiness, but all did shoot short of the mark. The highest elevation of a reasonable soul, is to enjoy God for ever. It is the enjoying God that makes heaven, 1 *Theff.* iv. 17. *Then shall we ever be with the Lord.* The soul trembles, as the needle in the compass, and is never at rest till it comes to God. To set out this excellent state of a glorified soul's enjoying God. 1. This enjoying of God must not be understood in a sensual manner; we must not conceive any carnal pleasures in heaven. The *Turks* in their *Alcoran* speak of a paradise of pleasure, where they have riches in abundance, and red wine served in golden chalices. Here is an heaven consisting of pleasures for the body; the *Epicures* of this age would like such an heaven when they die. Tho' indeed the state of glory be compared to a feast, and is set out by pearls and precious stones, yet these metaphors are only to be helps to our faith, and to show us that there is superabundant joy and felicity in the empyrean heaven; but those are not carnal, but sacred delights: as our employment shall be spiritual, it will consist in adoring and praising of God: So our enjoyment shall be spiritual, it shall consist in the having the perfection of holiness, in seeing the pure face of Christ, in feeling the love of God, in conversing with heavenly spirits: these delights will be more adequate and proper for the soul, and infinitely exceed all carnal voluptuous delights. 2. We shall have a lively sense of this glorious estate. A man in a lethargy tho' he be alive, yet he is as good as dead, because he is not sensible, nor doth he take any pleasure in his life; we shall have a quick and lively sense of the infinite pleasure which ariseth from enjoyment of God; we shall know ourselves to be happy; we shall reflect with joy upon our dignity and felicity; we shall taste every crumb of that sweetness, every drop of that pleasure which flows from God. 3. We shall be made able to bear a sight of that glory: we could not now bear that glory, it would overwhelm us; as a weak eye cannot behold the sun; but God will capacitate us for glory; our soul shall be so heavenly, and perfected with

holiness, that they may be able to enjoy the blessed vision of God. *Moses* in a cleft of the rock saw the glory of God passing by, *Exod.* xxxiii. 22. Thro' that blessed rock Christ, we shall behold the beatifical sight of God. 4. This enjoyment of God shall be more than a bare contemplation of him. Some of the learned move the question, Whether the enjoyment of God shall be only by way of contemplation? Ans. That is something, but it is but one half of heaven; there shall be a loving of God, an acquiescence in him, a tasting his sweetness; not only inspection but possession, *John* xvii. 24. *That they may behold my glory:* there is inspection: *ver.* 22. *And the glory thou hast given me, I have given them;* there's possession. *Glory shall be revealed in us,* *Rom.* viii. 18. not only revealed to us, but in us. To behold God's glory, there is glory revealed to us; but to partake of his glory, there is glory revealed in us. As the sponge sucks in the wine, so we shall suck in glory. 5. There's no intermission in this state of glory. We shall not only have God's glorious presence at certain special seasons, but we shall be continually in his presence; continually under divine raptures of joy. There shall not be one minute in heaven, wherein a glorified soul may say, I do not enjoy happiness. The streams of glory are not like the water of a conduit, often stopped, that we cannot have one drop of water; but those heavenly streams of joy are continually running. O how should we despise this valley of tears where we now are, for the mount of transfiguration! How should we long for the full enjoyment of God in paradise! Had we a sight of that land of promise, we should need patience to be content to live here any longer.

2d. Let this be a spur to duty. How diligent and zealous should we be in glorifying God, that we come at last to enjoy him? If *Tully*, *Demosthenes*, *Plato*, who had but the dim watch-light of reason to see by, and did but phansy an *Elysium* and happiness after this life, did take such Herculean pains to enjoy it; O then how should Christians, who have the light of Scripture to see by, bestir themselves, that they may arrive at the eternal fruition of God and glory! If any thing may make us rise off our bed of sloth, and serve God with all our might, it should be this; the hope of our full enjoyment of God for ever. What made *Paul* so active in the sphere of religion? 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all.* His obedience



obedience did not move slow, as the sun on the dial; but swift, as the sun in the firmament. Why was he so zealous in glorifying God, but that he might at last centre and terminate in him? *1 Thess. iv. 17. Then shall we be ever with the Lord.*

3d. *Use of Consolation.* Let this comfort the godly in all the present miseries they feel. Thou complainest, Christian, thou dost not enjoy thyself; fears disquiet thee, wants perplex thee; in

the day thou canst not enjoy ease, in the night thou canst not enjoy sleep: thou dost not enjoy the comforts of thy life. Let this revive thee, that shortly thou shalt enjoy God, and then shalt have more than thou canst ask or think; thou shalt have angels joy, glory without intermission and expiration. We shall never enjoy ourselves fully, till we enjoy God eternally.



## OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Q. II. *WHAT rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

*Ans.* The word of God (which is contained in the the scriptures of the old and new testament) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

2 *Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, &c.* By scripture is understood the sacred book of God.—It is given by divine inspiration; that is, the scripture is not the contrivance of man's brain, but of a divine original. The image of *Diana* was had in veneration by the *Ephesians*, because they did suppose it fell from *Jupiter*, *Acts xix. 35.* This book then of the holy scripture is to be highly revered and esteemed, because we are sure it came from heaven, 2 *Pet. i. 21.* The two testaments are the two lips by which God hath spoken to us.

Qu. *How doth it appear that the scriptures have a Jus Divinum, a divine authority stamped upon them?*

*Ans.* Because the Old and New Testament are the foundation of all religion. If their divinity cannot be proved, the foundation is gone on which we build our faith. I shall therefore endeavour to evince this great truth, that the scriptures are the very word of God. I wonder whence the scriptures should come, if not from God. 1. Bad men could not be the authors of scripture; would their minds be employed in inking such holy lines? would they decline so fiercely against sin? 2. Good men could not be the authors of scripture. Could they write in such a strain? or could it stand with their grace to counterfeit God's name, and put, *Thus saith the Lord*, to a book of their own devising? 3. Nor could any angel in heaven be the author

of scripture. Because, 1. The angels pry and search into the abyss of gospel mysteries, 1 *Pet. i. 12.* which implies their nescience of some parts of Scripture; and sure they cannot be authors of that book which themselves do not fully understand. Besides, 2. What angel in heaven durst be so arrogant as to personate God, and say, *I create*, *Isa. lxxv. 17.* and, *I the Lord have said it*, *Num. xiv. 35.* So that it is evident, the pedigree of scripture is sacred, and it could come from none but God himself.

Not to speak of the harmonious consent of all the parts of scripture, there are 7 cogent arguments may evince it to be the word of God.

1. By its *Antiquity*: It is of antient standing. The gray hairs of scripture make it venerable. No human histories extant reach further than since *Noah's* flood; but the holy scripture relates matter of fact that have been from the beginning of the world; it writes of things before time. Now, that is a sure rule of *Tertullian*, "That which is of the greatest antiquity, *id verum quod primum*, is to be received as most sacred and authentic."

2. We may know the scriptures to be the word of God, *by the miraculous preservation of it in all ages.* The holy scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ hath left; and the church of God hath kept these public records of heaven, that they have not been lost. The word of God hath never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it. They have given out a law concerning scripture, as *Pharaoh* did the midwives concerning the *Hebrew* womens children, to strangle it in the birth; yet God hath preserved this blessed book inviolable to this day. The devil and his agents have



have been blowing at scripture-light, but could never prevail to blow it out, a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. Nor hath the church of God, in all revolutions and changes, only kept the scripture that it should not be lost, but that it should not be depraved. The letter of Scripture hath been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue. The Scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would never have sent the Jews to the scriptures; but he sends them to the Scriptures, *John v. 39. Search the Scriptures.* Christ knew these sacred Springs were not muddied with human fancies.

4. The Scripture appears to be the word of God, by the matter contained it. (1.) By its *profundity*. The mystery of Scripture is so abstruse and profound, that no man or angel could have known it, had it not been divinely revealed. That eternity should be born; that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; That he who rules the stars, should suck the breasts: That the prince of life should die; That the Lord of glory should be put to shame; That sin should be punished to the full, yet pardoned to the full: who could ever have conceived of such a mystery, had not the scripture been the oracle to reveal it to us? So, for the doctrine of the resurrection, That the same body which is crumbled into a thousand pieces, should rise *idem numero*, the same individual body, (for else it were a creation, not a resurrection.) How could such a sacred riddle, above all human disquisition, be known, had not the scripture made a discovery of it? (2.) By its *Purity*. It is for the matter of it so full of goodness, justice, and sanctity, that it could be breathed from none but from God: the holiness of it shows it to be of God, it bears his very image. The scripture is compared to silver refined seven times, *Psal. xii. 6.* This book of God hath no errata's in it: It is a beam of the sun of righteousness, a crystal stream flowing from the fountain of life. All laws and edicts of men have had their corruptions, but the word of God hath not the least tincture, it is of a meridian splendor, *Pf. cxix. 140. Thy word is very pure*, like wine that comes from the grape, which is not mixed nor adulterated. It is so pure, that it purifies every thing else, *John xvii. 17. Sanctify them thro' thy truth.* The scripture presseth holiness, so as never any book did: it bids us *live soberly, righteously, godly*, *Titus ii. 12.* Soberly, in acts of temperance; righte-

ously, in acts of justice; godly, in the acts of zeal and devotion. It commends to us, *whatever is just, lovely, and of good report*, *Phil. iv. 8.* This sword of the spirit, *Eph. vi. 17.* cuts down vice. Out of this tower of scripture is thrown down a millstone upon the head of sin. The scripture is the royal law, which commands not only the actions, but affections; it binds the heart to its good behaviour. Where is there such holiness to be found, as is dig'd out of this sacred mine? who could be the author of such a book, but God himself?

4. That the scripture is the word of God is evident by its *Predictions*; it prophesieth of things to come. This shows the voice of God speaking in it; it was foretold by the prophet, *A virgin shall conceive*, *Isa. vii. 14.* and, *The Messiah shall be cut off*, *Dan. ix. 26.* The scripture foretels things that should fall out many ages and centuries after; as how long *Israel* should serve in the iron furnace, and the very day of their deliverance, *Exod. xii. 41. At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same day, it came to pass, the host of the Lord went out of Egypt.* This prediction of future things, merely contingent, and not depending upon natural causes, is a clear demonstration of its divine original.

5. The *Impartiality* of those men of God, who wrote the scriptures; they do not spare to set down their own failings. What men that writes an history would black his own face, *viz.* Record those things of himself that might stain his reputation? *Moses* records his own impatience when he struck the rock, and tells us, therefore he could not enter into the land of Promise. *David* writes of his own adultery and bloodshed, which stands as a blot in his scutcheon to succeeding ages. *Peter* relates his own pusillanimity in denying Christ. *Jonah* sets down his own passions, *I do well to be angry to the death.* Surely, had not their pen been guided by God's own hand, they would never have written that which did reflect dishonour upon themselves. Men do usually rather hide their blemishes, than publish them to the world: but these pen-men of holy scripture eclipse their own name; they take away all the glory from themselves, and give the glory to God.

6. *Arg.* The *mighty Power and Efficacy* the word hath had upon the souls and consciences of men. (1.) It hath changed their hearts. (2.) Some by reading of scripture have been turn-



ed into other men, they have been made holy and gracious. By reading other books the heart may be warmed, but by reading this book it is transformed, *2 Cor. iii. 3. Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God.* The word was copied out into their hearts, and they were become Christ's epistle, so that others might read Christ in them. If you should set a seal upon marble, and it should make an impression upon the marble, and leave a print behind, there were a strange virtue in that seal: so, when the seal of the word leaves a heavenly print of grace upon the heart, there must needs be a power going along with that word no less than divine. (2.) It hath comforted their hearts. When Christians have sat by the rivers weeping, the word hath dropped as honey, and sweetly revived them. A Christian's chief comfort is drawn out of these wells of salvation; *Rom. xv. 4. That we thro' comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* When a poor soul hath been ready to faint, he hath had nothing to comfort him but a scripture cordial. When he hath been sick, the word hath revived him; *2 Cor. iv. 17. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* When he hath been deserted, the word hath drop'd in the golden oil of joy into his heart; *Lam. iii. 31. The Lord will not cast off for ever.* He may change his providence, not his purpose: he may have the look of an enemy, but the heart of a father. Thus the word hath a power in it to comfort the heart; *Pf. cxix. 50. This is my comfort in mine affliction; for thy word hath quickned me.* As the spirits are conveyed thro' the arteries of the body; so divine comforts are conveyed thro' the promises of the word. Now the scriptures having such an exhilarating heart-comforting power in them, it shows clearly that they are of God, and it is he that hath put this milk of consolation into these breasts.

7. The great Miracles wherewith the Lord hath confirmed Scripture. Miracles were used by Moses, Elijah, Christ, and continued many years after by the apostles, to confirm the verity of the holy Scriptures. As props are set under weak vines, so these miracles were set under the weak faith of men, that if they would not believe the writings of the word, yet they might believe the miracles. We read of God's dividing the waters, making a cawsey in the sea

for his people to go over, the iron swimming, the oil increasing by pouring out, Christ's making wine of water, his curing the blind, and raising the dead: thus God hath set a seal to the truth and divinity of the scripture by miracles.

*Object. The Papists indeed cannot deny but that the scripture is divine and sacred; but they affirm, that quoad nos, with respect to us, it receives its divine authority from the church; and they bring that scripture, 1 Tim. iii. 15. where the church is said to be the ground and pillar of truth.*

*Ans.* 'Tis true, the church is the pillar of truth; but it doth not therefore follow, that the scripture hath its authority from the church. The king's proclamation is fixed on the pillar, the pillar holds it out that all may read, but the proclamation doth not receive its authority from the pillar, but from the king: so the church holds forth the scriptures, but they do not receive their authority from the church, but from God. If the word of God should be divine because the church holds it forth, then it will follow, that our faith is to be built upon the church, and not upon the word; contrary to that, *Eph. ii. 20. Built upon the foundation (that is the doctrine) of the apostles and prophets.*

*Qu. Are all the books in the bible of the same divine authority?*

*Ans.* Those which we call canonical.

*Q. Why are the scriptures called canonical?*

*Ans.* Because the word is a rule of faith, a canon to direct our lives. The word is the judge of controversies, the rock of infallibility; that only is to be received for truth, which is consonant to, and agrees with scripture as the transcript with the original. All maxims in divinity are to be brought to the touch-stone of scripture, as all measures are brought to the standard.

*Qu. Are the scriptures a compleat rule?*

*Ans.* The scripture is a full and perfect canon, containing in it all things necessary to salvation, *2 Tim. iii. 15. From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.* It shews the *Credenda*, what we are to believe; and *Agenda*, what we are to practise. It gives us an exact model of religion, and perfectly instructs us in the deep things of God. The Papists therefore make themselves guilty, who go to seek out scripture with their traditions, to which they equalize it. The council of Trent saith, That the traditions of the



the church of Rome are to be received *pari pietatis affectu*, with the same devotion that scripture is to be received with: so bring themselves under that curse, *Rev. xxii. 18. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.*

*Q. What is the main scope and end of scripture?*

*Ans.* To chalk out a way to salvation. It makes a clear discovery of Christ, *John xx. 31. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* The design of the word, is to be an examen, whereby our grace is to be tried; a sea-mark to show us what rocks we are to avoid. The word is to sublimite and quicken our affections; it is to be our directory and consolatory; it is to waft us over to the land of promise.

*Qu. Who shall have the power of interpreting scriptures?*

The Papists do assert, that it is in the power of the church. If you ask who they mean by the church; they say, the Pope who is head of it, and he is infallible; so *Bellarmino*. But that assertion is false, because many of the Popes have been ignorant and vitious, as *Platina* affirms, who writes of the lives of Popes: Pope *Liberius* was an *Arian*, and Pope *John XXII.* denied the immortality of the soul; therefore Popes are not fit interpreters of scripture: who then?

*Ans.* The scripture is to be its own interpreter, or rather the Spirit speaking in it: nothing can cut the diamond but the diamond; nothing can interpret scripture but scripture; the sun best discovers itself by its own beams; the scripture interprets itself in easy places to the understanding. But the question is concerning hard places of scripture, where the weak Christian is ready to write beyond his depth, who shall interpret here?

*Ans.* In the church, God hath appointed, some to expound and interpret scripture; therefore he hath given gifts to men; the several pastors of churches, like bright constellations, give light to dark scriptures, *Mal. ii. 7. The priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.*

*Qu. But this is to pin our faith upon men?*

*Ans.* We are to receive nothing for current, but what is agreeable to the word; as God hath given to his ministers gifts for the interpreting obscure places, so he hath given to his people so much of the spirit of discerning, that they can tell (at least in things necessary to salvation)

what is consonant to scripture, and what is not; *1 Cor. xii. 10. To one is given a spirit of prophecy, to another discerning of spirits:* God hath endued his people with such a measure of wisdom and discretion, that they can discern between truth and error, and judge what is sound, and what is spurious, *Acts xvii. 11. The Bereans searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so:* They weighed the doctrine they heard, whether it was agreeable to scripture, tho' *Paul* and *Silas* were their teachers, *2 Tim. iii. 16.*

*Use 1.* See the wonderful goodness of God, who, besides the light of nature, hath committed to us the sacred scriptures. The heathens are enveloped with ignorance; *Pf. clxvii. 20. As for his judgments they have not known them.* They have the oracles of the *Sybil*s, but not the writings of *Moses* and the apostles. How many live in the region of death, where this bright star of scripture never appeared! We have this blessed book of God to resolve all our cases, to chalk out a way of life to us. *John xiv. 22. Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

(2.) Seeing God hath given us his written word to be our directory, this takes away all excuses from men. No man can say, I went wrong for want of a light; no, God hath given thee his word as a lamp to thy feet; therefore now, if thou goest wrong, thou dost it wilfully. No man can say, If I had known the will of God, I would have obeyed; no, thou art inexcusable, O man, God hath given thee a rule to go by, he hath written his law with his own finger; therefore now, if thou obeyest not, thou hast no apology left. If a master leaves his mind in writing with his servant, and tells him what work he will have done, yet the servant neglects the work, that servant is left without excuse, *John xv. 22. Now you have no cloke for your sins.*

*Use 2.* Is all scripture of divine inspiration? is it a book made by God himself? Then this reproveth, 1. The Papists, who take away part of scripture, and so clip the king of heaven's coin; they expunge the second commandment out of their catechisms, because it makes against images: 'tis usual with them, if they meet with any thing in scripture which they dislike, either they put a false gloss upon it, or, if that will not do, pretend it is corrupted; these are like *Ananias*, who kept back part of the money, *Acts v. 2.* so they keep back part of the scrip-



ture from the people. This is an high affront to God, to deface and obliterate any part of his word: by this they bring themselves under that premunire, *Rev. xxii. 19. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.* Is all scripture of divine inspiration? 2. It condemns the *Antinomians*, that lay aside the old testament as useles, and out of date; they call them Old-Testament Christians: God hath stamp'd a divine majesty upon both testaments; and, till they can shew me where God hath given a repeal to the old, it stands in force. The two testaments are the two wells of salvation; the *Antinomians* would stop up one of these wells, they would dry up one of the breasts of scripture. There is much gospel in the old testament; the comforts of the gospel in the new testament have their rise from the old. The great promise of the Messiah is in the old testament, *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son:—*Nay, I say more, the moral law in some part of it speaks gospel, I am the Lord thy God; here is the pure wine of the gospel. The saints great charter, where God promiseth to *sprinkle clean water upon them, and put his spirit within them*, is to be found primarily in the old testament, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.* So that they who take away the old testament, do, as *Samson*, pull down the pillars, they would take away the pillars of a Christian's comfort. 3. It condemns the enthusiasts, who, pretending the spirit, lay aside the whole bible; they say the scripture is a dead letter, and they live above it: What impudency is this? Till we are above sin, we shall not be above scripture. Let not men talk of a revelation from the spirit, suspect it to be an imposture; the spirit of God acts regularly, it works in and by the word; and he that pretends to a new light, which is either above the word, or contrary to it, abuseth both himself and the spirit; his light is borrowed from him who transforms himself into an angel of light. 4. It condemns the slighers of scripture; such are they who can go whole weeks and months, and never read the word. They lay it aside as rusty armour; they prefer a play or romance before scripture, the *magnalia legis* are to them *minutula*. O how many can be looking their faces in a glass all the morning, but their eyes begin to be sore when they look upon a bible! heathens die in the want of scripture, and these in the contempt of it. They surely must needs

go wrong who slight their guide; such as lay the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and never use the curbing bitt of scripture to check them, are carried to hell, and never stop. 5. It condemns the abusers of scripture: (1.) Who do mud and poison this pure crystal fountain with their corrupt glosses; who wrest scripture, *2 Pet. iii. 16.* The *Greek* word is they set it upon the rack; they give wrong interpretations of it, not comparing scripture with scripture: as the *Antinomians* pervert that scripture, *Num. xxiii. 21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob*; hence they infer, God's people may take liberty in sin, because God sees no sin in them. 'Tis true, God sees no sin in his people with an eye of revenge, but he sees it with an observation. He sees not sin in them, so as to damn them; but he sees it, so as to be angry, and severely to punish them. Did not *David* find it so, when he cried out of his broken bones? In like manner the *Arminians* wrest scripture, *John v. 40. Ye will not come to me*; here they bring in free-will. This text shows 1<sup>st</sup>, How willing God is that we should have life; 2<sup>dly</sup>, That sinners may do more than they do; they may improve the talents God hath given them: but it doth not prove the power of free-will, for it is contrary to that scripture, *John vi. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.* These therefore wring the text so hard, as they make the blood come; they do not compare scripture with scripture. (2.) Who do jest with scripture? When they are sad, they take the scripture as their lute or minstrel to play with, and so drive away the sad spirit; as that drunkard I have read of, who having drunk off his cups, called to some of his fellows, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. In the fear of God take heed of this. *Eusebius* tells us of one, who took a piece of scripture to make a jest of, who was presently struck with a phrenzy, and ran mad. And, 'tis a saying of *Luther*, *Quos Deus vult perdere, &c.* "Whom God intends to destroy, he gives them leave to play with scripture."

Use 3<sup>d</sup>. Of exhortation. If the scripture be of divine inspiration, then be exhorted, 1. To study the scripture; it is a copy of God's will: be scripture-men, bible-christians. *I adore the fulness of scripture*, saith *Tertullian*. In the book of God are scattered many truths as so many pearls, *John v. 36. Search the scriptures: Search as for a vein of silver: this blessed book will*



will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace. God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if God took pains to write, well may we take pains to read. *Apollos* was mighty in the scriptures, *Acts* xviii. 24. The word is our *magna charta* for heaven; shall we be ignorant of our charter; *Col.* iii. 19. *Let the word of God dwell in you richly.* The memory must be a table-book where the word is written. To make us read the word, consider, 1. There is majesty sparkling, in every line of scripture: take but one instance, *Isa.* lxiii. 1. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.* Behold here a lofty magnificent stile? What angel could speak after this manner? *Junius* was converted by reading one verse of *John*; he beheld a majesty in it beyond all human rhetoric. 2. There is a melody in scripture. This is that blessed harp which drives away sadness of spirit: hear the sounding of this harp a little, *1 Tim.* i. xv. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;* he took not only our flesh upon him, but our sins. And *Mat.* xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* How sweetly doth this harp of scripture sound; what heavenly music doth it make in the ears of a distressed sinner, especially when the finger of God's spirit toucheth upon this instrument? 3. There is divinity in scripture. It contains the marrow and quintessence of religion. The scripture is a rock of diamonds, a mystery of piety; the lips of scripture have grace poured into them. The scripture speaks of faith, self-denial, and all the graces, which, as a chain of pearl adorn, a Christian. The scripture excites to holiness, it treats of another world, it gives a prospect of eternity: oh then search the scripture! make the word familiar to you. Had I the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently set forth the excellency of scripture: it is a spiritual optic-glass, in which we behold God's glory; it is the tree of life, the oracle of wisdom, the rule of manners, the heavenly seed of which the new creature is formed, *James* i. 18. *The two testaments (saith Austin) are the two breasts which every Christian must suck, that he may get spiritual nourishment.* The leaves of the tree of life were for healing, *Rev.* xxii. 2. so these holy leaves of scripture,

like those leaves, are for the healing of our souls. The scripture is profitable for all things: if we are deserted, here is spiced wine that cheers the heavy heart; if we are pursued by satan, here is the sword of the spirit to resist him: if we are diseased with sin's leprosy, here are the waters of the sanctuary, both to cleanse and cure. Oh then, search the scriptures! there is no danger in tasting this tree of knowledge: there was a penalty laid at first, that we might not taste of the tree of knowledge, *Gen.* iii. 17. *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:* but there is no danger of plucking this tree of holy scripture; if we do not eat of this tree of knowledge, we shall surely die: oh, then read the scriptures!—Time may come when the scriptures may be kept from us.

Qu. *How should we so search the scriptures, as to find life?*

Ans. 1. Read the Bible with reverence; think, every line you read, God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the law was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the *Levites* might not touch it, *Exod.* xxv. 14. And why was this, but to breed in the people reverence to the law? 2. Read with seriousness. 'Tis matter of life and death: by this word you must be tried; conscience and scripture are the jury God will proceed by in judging of you. 3. Read the word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the word; go to it to fetch fire. *Luke* xxiv. 32. *Did not our hearts burn within us?* Labour that the word may not only be a lamp to direct, but a fire to warm. Read the scripture, not only as an history, but as a love-letter sent to you from God which may affect your hearts. 4. Pray that the same spirit that wrote the word, may assist you in the reading of it; that God's spirit would show you the wonderful things of his law. Go near, faith God to *Philip*, *join thyself to this chariot*, *Acts* viii. 29. So, when God's spirit joins himself with this chariot of the word, then it becomes effectual.

2. Be exhorted to prize the word written, *Job* xxiii. 12. *David* valued the word more precious than gold. What would the martyrs have given for a leaf of the Bible! The word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but a weight of glory. 1. The scripture is a sacred collyrium, or eye-salve to illuminate us. *Prov.* vi. 23. *The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.* The scripture is the card



and compass by which we sail to the new *Jerusalem*. 2. The scripture is a *sovereign cordial in all distresses*. What are the promises but the water of life to renew fainting spirits? Is it sin troubles? There is a scripture-cordial, *Pf. lxxv. 3. Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away*; or, as it is in the Hebrew, *thou shalt cover them*. Is it outward afflictions disquiet thee? There is a scripture-cordial, *Pf. xci. 15. I will be with him in trouble*; not only to behold, but to uphold. Thus, as in the ark was laid up manna, promises are laid up as manna in the ark of scripture. 3. The scripture will make us wise: wisdom is above troubles; *Pf. cxix. 104. By thy precepts I get understanding*. What made *Eve* so desire the tree of knowledge? *Gen. iii. 6. It was a tree to make one wise*. The scriptures teach a man to know himself: they discover Satan's snares and stratagems, *2 Cor. ii. 11. They make one wise to salvation*, *2 Tim. iii. 15. O then highly prize the scriptures!* I read of queen *Elizabeth*, at her coronation she received the Bible presented to her, with both her hands, and kissing it, laid it to her breast, saying, that that book had ever been her chiefest delight.

3. If the scripture is of divine inspiration, believe the word. The *Romans*, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at *Rome*. O give credence to the word! it is breathed from God's own mouth. Hence ariseth all the prophaneities of men, they do not believe the scripture, *Is. liii. 1. Who hath believed our report?* Did you believe the glorious rewards the scripture speaks of, would you not give diligence to make your election sure? Did you believe the infernal torments the scripture speaks of, would not this put you into a cold sweat, and cause a trembling at heart for sin? But people are in part atheists, they give but little credit to the word, therefore they are so impious, and draw such dark shadows in their lives. Learn to realize scripture, get your hearts wrought to a firm belief of it. Some think, if God should send an angel from heaven, and declare his mind, then they should rather believe him, or if he should send one from the damned, and preach the torments of hell all in flames, then they would believe. But, *Luke xvi. 31. If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead*. God is wise, and he thinks this way fittest to make his

mind known to us by writing; and such as will not be convinced by the word, shall be judged by the word. The belief of the scripture is of high importance: it is the belief of scripture that will enable us to resist temptation; *1 John ii. 14. The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one*. 'Tis the belief of scripture conduceth much to our sanctification; therefore these two are put together, sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, *2 Th. ii. 13. If the word written be not believed, it is like writing on the water, which takes no impression*.

4. Love the word written: *Pf. cxix. 97. O how love I thy law!* "Lord, (saith *Augustine*) let the holy scriptures be my chaste delight." *Chrysostom* compares the scripture to a garden; every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not in our bosom, but our heart. *David* tasted the word *sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb*, *Pf. xix. 10. There is that in scripture may breed delight: it shows us the way to riches*, *Deut. xxviii. 5. Prov. iii. 10. To long life*, *Pf. xxxiv. 12. To a kingdom*, *Heb. xii. 28. Well then, may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy scriptures; well may we say with the prophet, Jer. xv. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart*.

5. Conform to scripture, let us lead scripture-lives. O that the Bible might be seen printed in our lives! do what the word commands. Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the Bible, *Pf. lxxxvi. 11. I will walk in thy truth*. Let the word be the sundial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the scripture, if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it? What is a carpenter the better to have his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for the measuring and squaring his work? So, what are we the better for the rule of the word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it? How many swerve and deviate from the rule? The word teacheth to be sober and temperate, but they are drunk; to be chaste and holy, but they are prophane; they go quite from the rule. What a dishonour is this to religion, for men to live in contradiction to scripture? The word is called a *light to our feet*, *Pf. cxix. 105. It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight,*  
but



but to our feet to mend our walk. O let us lead Bible conversations.

6. *Contend for scripture.* Tho' we should not be of contentious spirits, yet we ought to contend for the word of God; this jewel is too precious to be parted with; *Prov. iv. 13. Keep her, for she is thy life.* The scripture is beset with enemies; heretics fight against it, we must therefore *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*, Jude 3. The scripture is our book of evidences for heaven; shall we part with our evidences? The saints of old were both advocates and martyrs for truth; they would hold fast scripture, tho' it were with the loss of their lives.

7. *Be thankful to God for the scriptures.* What a mercy is it that God hath not only acquainted us what his will is, but that he hath made it known by writing! In the old times God did reveal his mind by revelations, but the word written is a surer way of knowing God's mind than by revelation, *2 Pet. i. 19.* This voice which came from heaven we heard, we have also a more sure word of prophecy. The devil is God's ape, and he can transform himself into an angel of light; he can deceive with false revelations: as I have heard of one who had, as he thought, a revelation from God to sacrifice his child, as *Abraham* had; whereupon he following this impulsion of the devil,

did kill his child. Thus Satan oft deceives people with delusions, instead of divine revelations; therefore we are to be thankful to God for revealing his mind to us by writing: we have a more sure word of prophecy. We are not left under a doubtful suspense that we should not know what to believe, but we have an infallible rule to go by. The scripture is our pole-star to direct us to heaven, it shews us every step we are to take; when we go wrong, it instructs us; when we go right, it comforts us; and 'tis matter of thankfulness, that the scriptures are made intelligible, by being translated.

8. *Adore God's distinguishing grace*, if you have felt the power and authority of the word upon your conscience; if you can say as *David*, *Psal. cxix. 50. Thy word hath quickned me.* Christian, bless God that he hath not only given thee his word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness: bless God that he hath not only written his word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual. Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? O free grace! that God should send out this word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee, and not others? that the same scripture, which is to them a dead letter, should be to thee a favour of life.



THAT THERE IS A GOD.

Q. III. **W**hat do the scriptures principally teach?

*Ans.* The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Qu. *What is God?*

*Ans.* God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Here is, 1. Something implied, That there is a God. 2. Expressed, That he is a spirit. 3. What kind of spirit.

1. Implied, That there is a God: The question, *What is God?* takes it for granted that there is a God; the belief of God's essence is the foundation of all religious worship, *Heb. xi. 6.* He that comes to God, must believe that

he is. There must be a first cause, which gives a being and existence to all things besides. We come to know that there's a God, 1. By the book of nature, the notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart, it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural atheist; he may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgment believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he hath such a lethargy upon him, that he hath sinned away his very sense and reason. 2. We come to know that there is a God by his works; and this is so evident a demonstration of a Godhead, that the most atheistical spirits, when they have considered these works of God, have been forced to acknowledge



knowledge some wise and supream power the Maker of these things; as 'tis reported of *Galen* and others. (1.) We will begin with the greater world, (1.) The creation of the glorious fabric of heaven and earth; sure there must be some architect or first cause, the world could not make itself: who could hang the earth on nothing, but the great God? Who could provide such rich furniture for the heavens, the glorious constellations, the firmament bespangled with such glittering lights? All this speaks a Deity: We may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Who could give the earth its clothing, cover it with grass and corn, adorn it with flowers, enrich it with gold? Only God, *Job xxviii. 4.* Who but God could make the sweet music in the heavens, cause the angels to join in consort, and sound forth the praises of their Maker? *Job xxxviii. 7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.* If a man should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that some greater power built them: to imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by God, is as if we should conceive a curious landskip to be drawn by a pencil without the hand of a limner; *Acts xvii. 24. God that made the world, and all things therein.* To create, is proper to a Deity. 2. The wise government of all things evinces there is a God: God is the great Superintendent of the world, he holds the golden reins of government in his hand, guiding all things most regularly and harmoniously to their proper end; who that eyes providence, but must be forced to acknowledge there is a God? Providence is the queen and governess of the world; it is the hand that turns the wheel of the whole creation; providence sets the sun its race, the sea its bounds. If God should not guide the world, things would run into disorder and confusion: when one looks on a clock, and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, the hanging of the plummets, he would say, there were some artificer did make it, and put it into that order: so, when we see the excellent order and harmony in the universe, the sun that great luminary dispensing its light and heat to the world, without which the world were but a grave or prison; the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the bodies of men, and prevent a drought; and every creature acting within its

sphere, and keeping its due bounds; we must needs acknowledge there is a God, who wisely orders and governs all these things. Who could set this great army of the creatures in their several ranks and squadrons, and keep them in their constant march; but He, whose name is, *The Lord of hosts*? And as God doth wisely dispose all things in the whole regiment of the creatures, so by his power he doth support them: did God suspend and withdraw his influence never so little, the wheels of the creation would unpin, and the axle-tree break asunder. (3.) The motion of the creatures: all motion, as the philosophers say, is from something that is unmoveable. As for example, the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the heavenly bodies; the sun and moon, and these planets, are moved by the highest orb, call'd *Primum Mobile*: now, if one should ask, Who moves that highest orb, or the first mover of the planets? sure it can be no other hand but God himself.

(2.) Let us speak of Man, who is a microcosm or lesser world: the excellent contexture and frame of his body, who is wrought curiously as with need-lework, *Pf. cxxxix. 15. I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth*; and the endowment of this body with a noble soul; who but God could make such an union of different substances, flesh and spirit? in him we live, and move, and have our being. The quick, acute motion of every part of the body, shews that there is a God, we may see something of him in the sparkling of the eye: and if the cabinet of the body be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? The soul hath a celestial brightness in it; as *Damascen* saith, 'Tis a diamond set in a ring of clay. What noble faculties is the soul endowed with? Understanding, Will, Affections, which are a glass of the Trinity, as *Plato* speaks. The matter of the soul is spiritual, 'tis a divine sparkle lighted from heaven; and being spiritual, is immortal, as *Scaliger* notes; *anima non senescit*, the soul doth not wax old, it lives for ever: and who could create a soul enobled with such rare angelical properties, but God? We must needs say as the Psalmist, *It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves*, *Psalm. c. 3.*

2. We may prove a Deity by our *Conscience*. Conscience is God's deputy or vicegerent. Conscience is a witness of a Deity: if there were no bible to tell us there is a God, yet conscience



conscience might. Conscience, as the apostle saith, *either accuseth or excuseth*, Rom. ii. 15. Conscience acts in order to an higher judicatory. 1. Natural conscience, being kept free from gross sin, excuseth. When a man doth virtuous actions, lives soberly and righteously, observes the golden maxim, doing to others as he would have them to do to him; then conscience approves, and saith, Well done: conscience, like a bee, gives honey. 2. Natural conscience in the wicked doth accuse: when men go against the light of conscience, then they feel the worm of conscience. *Eheu quis intus scorpio?* Sen. Conscience, being sinned against, spits fire in men's faces, fills them with shame and horror: when the sinner sees an hand-writing on the wall of conscience, his countenance is changed. Many have hanged themselves to quiet their conscience. *Tiberius* the emperor, a bloody man, felt the lashes of his conscience; he was so haunted with that fury, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily. And what is it should put a man's conscience into *such an agony*, but the impresson of a Deity, and the thoughts of coming before God's tribunal? Those who are above all human laws, yet are subject to the checks of their own conscience. And 'tis observable, the nearer the wicked approach to death, the more they are terrified, and conscience gives a louder alarm to them; and whence is this, but from the apprehension of judgment approaching? The soul, being sensible of its immortal nature, trembles at him, who never ceaseth to live, and therefore will never cease to punish.

3. That there is a God, appears by the *consent of nations*, by the universal vote and suffrage of all. *Nulla gens tam barbara cui non insideat hæc persuasio Deum esse.* Tully; no nation so barbarous, saith Tully, as not to believe there is a God. Tho' the Heathen did mistake in their devotion, they did not worship the true God, yet they worshipped a god. They set up an altar, *To the unknown God*, Acts xvii. 22. They knew a God should be worshipped, tho' they knew not the God whom they worshipped. Some did worship *Jupiter*, some *Nephtune*, some *Mars*; rather than not to worship something, they would worship any thing.

4. That there is a God, appears by his *Prediction of future things*. He who can foretel things which shall surely come to pass, is the true God. God foretold, *that a virgin should conceive*; he prefixed the time when the *Messias*

*should be cut off*, Dan. ix. 26. he foretold *the captivity of the Jews in Babylon*, and who should be their deliverer, *Isa.* xlv. 1. This is such a strong argument to prove a Deity, as God himself useth it to prove he is the true God, and that all the gods of the Heathens were fictions and nullities, *Isa.* xli. 22. *Testimonium divinitatis est veritas divinationis*, Tertull. To foretel things contingent, and which depend upon no natural causes, is proper to a Deity.

5. That there is a God, appears by *God's unlimited power and sovereignty*. He who can work and none hinder him, is the true God; but God can do so, *Isa.* xliii. 13. *I will work, and who shall let it?* Nothing can hinder action but some superior power; but there is no power above God: all power that is, is by him, therefore all power is under him, he hath a *mighty arm*, *Psa.* lxxxix. 13. He sees the designs men drive on against him, and plucks off their chariot-wheels; he maketh diviners mad, *Isa.* xlv. 25. He cutteth off the spirit of princes; he bridleth the sea, gives check to the *Leviathan*, binds the devil in chains; he acts according to his pleasure, he doth what he will; I will work, and who shall let it.

6. *There are devils, therefore there is a God.* Atheists cannot deny but there are devils, and then they must grant there is a God. We read of divers possessed with the devil. The devils are called in scripture, *Hairy Ones*, because they oft appeared in the form of goats or satyrs. *Gerson*, in his book *de probatione spirituum*, tells us how Satan on a time appeared to an holy man in a most glorious manner, professing himself to be Christ; the old man answered, "I desire not to see my Saviour here in this desert, it shall suffice me to see him in heaven." Now, if there be a devil, then there is a God. *Socrates*, an heathen, when he was accused at his death, confessed that, as he thought, there was a *malus genius*, an evil spirit, so he thought there was a good.

Use 1. Seeing there is a God, this reproves such atheistical fools as deny it. *Epicurus* denied there was a providence, saying, that all things fell out by chance, *Diagoras*. He that saith there is no God, is the wickedest creature that is; he is worse than a thief, who doth but take away our goods from us, but the atheist would take away our God from us, *John* xx. *They have taken away my Lord*. So we may say of atheists, they would take away our God from us, in whom all our hope and com-



fort is laid up, *Psal. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. He durst not speak it with his tongue, but said it in his heart; he wished it. Sure none can be speculative atheists, The devils believe, and tremble, James ii. 16. I have read of one Arthur, a professed atheist, who, when he came to die, cried out he was damned: but tho' there are few found who say, There is no God; yet many deny him in their practices, Tit. i. 16. In works they deny him. Cicero said of Epicurus, Verbis reliquit Deos refutavit: The world is full of practical atheism, most people live as if they did not believe there was a God. Durst they lie, defraud, be unclean, if they believed there were a God who would call them to an account? If an Indian, who never heard of a God, should come among us, and have no other means to convince him of a Deity, but the lives of men in our age, surely he would be of Protagoras his mind, who did hang in a doubtful suspense, and did question whether there were a God; *atrum Dii sint non ausim affirmare.**

Use 2. Seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously, and give just rewards to men. Things seem to be carried in the world very unequally; the wicked flourish, *Pf. lxxiii. they who tempt God are delivered, Mal. iii. 15. the ripe clusters of grapes are squeezed into their cup, and, in the mean while, the godly, who wept for sin and served God, are afflicted; Pf. cii. 9. I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping. Evil men enjoy all the good, and good men endure all the evil. But seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously with men, Gen. xviii. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Offenders must come to punishment. The sinner's death-day, and dooms-day is a-coming; Pf. xxxvii. 13. The Lord seeth that his day is coming. While there is an hell, the wicked shall be scourged enough; and while there is eternity, they shall ly there long enough; and God will abundantly compensate the faithful service of his people. They shall have their white robes and crowns: *Pf. lviii. 11. Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth. Because God is God, therefore he will give forth glorious rewards to his people.**

Use 3. Seeing there is a God, woe to all such as engage this God against them; he lives for ever to be avenged upon them, *Ezek. xxii. 14. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be*

*strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?* Such as pollute God's sabbath, oppose his saints, trampling these jewels in the dust; such as live in a contradiction to God's word; these do engage the infinite majesty of heaven against them; and how dismal will their case be! *Deut. xxxii. 41. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, &c.* If it be so terrible to hear the lion rore, what is it when he begins to tear his prey? *Pf. lv. 22. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces.* O that men would think of this; who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow, but heavy: *Job xl. 9. Hast thou an arm like God? Canst thou strike such a blow? God is the best friend, but the worst enemy. If he can look men into their grave, how far can he throw them? Who knows the power of his wrath? Pf. xc. 11. What fools are they, who for a drop of pleasure drink a sea of wrath? Paracelsus speaks of a phrenzy some have, which will make them die dancing: sinners go dancing to hell.*

Use 4. Seeing there is a God, let us firmly believe this great article of our creed. What religion can there be in men, if they do not believe a Deity? *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is. To worship God, and pray to him, and not believe there is a God, is to put a high scorn and contempt upon God. Believe that God is the only true God; such a God as he hath revealed himself in his word, A lover of righteousness, and bater of wickedness, Pf. xlv. 7. The real belief of a Deity gives life to all religious worship; the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God, the more holy and angelical we are in our lives. Whether we are alone, or in company, God sees us: he is the heart-searcher; the belief of this would make us live always under God's eye, Pf. xvi. 8. I have set the Lord always before me. The belief of a Deity would be a bridle to sin, a spur to duty; it would add wings to prayer, and oyl to the lamp of our devotion. The belief of a Deity would cause dependence upon God in all our straits and exigencies; Gen. xvii. 1. I am God all-sufficient; a God that can supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, conquer all your temptations; the arm of God's power can never be shrunk; he can create mercy for us, and therefore can help, and not be beholden to the creature.*



creature. Did we believe there is a God, we should so depend on his providence as not to use any indirect means; we would not run our selves into sin to rid ourselves out of trouble: *2 Kings i. 4. Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron?* When men run to sinful shifts, is it not because they do not believe there is a God, or that he is all-sufficient?

2. Seeing there is a God, let us labour to get an interest in him, *Pf. xlviii. 14. This God is our God.* Two things will comfort us, deity and property: since the fall we have lost likeness to God, and communion with God; let us labour to recover this lost interest, and pronounce this *Shibboleth, My God, Pf. xliii. 5.* It is little comfort to know there is a God, unless he be ours; God offers himself to be our God, *Jer. xxxi. 33. I will be their God.* And faith catcheth hold of the offer, it appropriates God; and makes all that is in him over to us to be ours; his wisdom to be ours, to teach us; his holiness ours to sanctify us, his spirit ours, to comfort us; his mercy ours, to save us. To be able to say, God is mine, is more than to have all the mines of gold and silver.

3. Seeing there is a God, let us serve and worship him as a God: it was an indictment brought in against them, *Rom. i. 21. They glorified him not as God.* 1. Let us pray to him as to a God. *Pray with fervency, Jam. v. 16. An effectual fervent prayer prevails much.* This is both the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer. 2. Love him as a God, *Deut. vi. 5. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* To love him with all the heart, is to give him a precedency in our love, desire to let him have the cream of our affections; to love him not only appreciatively, but intensively, as much as we can. As the sun-beams united, in a burning-glass burn the hotter, so all our affections should be united, that our love to God may be more ardent. 3. Obey him as a God. All creatures obey him, the stars fight his battles, the wind and sea obey him, *Mark iv. 41. much more should man, whom God hath endued with a principle of reason: he is God, and hath a sovereignty over us; therefore as we received life from him, so we must receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things: this is to kiss him with a kiss of loyalty, and it is to glorify him as God.*

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

Q. IV. *WHAT is GOD?*

*Ans.* God is a spirit.

2. The thing expressed, *John iv. 24. God is a spirit.* God is *essentia spiritualissima*, Zanchy.

*Qu. What do you mean when you say, God is a spirit?*

*Ans.* By spirit I mean, God is an immaterial substance, of a pure, subtil, unmixed essence, not compounded of body and soul, without all extension of parts. The body is a dreggish thing: the more spiritual God's essence is, the more noble and excellent. The spirits are the more refined part of the wine.

*Qu. Wherein doth God differ from other spirits?*

1. The angels are spirits.

*Ans.* We must distinguish of spirits. 1. The angels are created, God is a spirit uncreate.

2. The angels are spirits, but they are finite,

and capable of being annihilated; the same power which made them, is able to reduce them to their first nothing; but God is an infinite spirit. 3. The angels are confined spirits, they cannot be in *duobus locis simul*, they are confined to a place: but God is an immense spirit, and cannot be confined, being in all places at once. 4. The angels, though they are spirits, yet they are but ministering spirits, *Heb. i. 14.* Though they are spirits, yet are they servants, God is a superexcellent spirit, the *father of spirits*, *Heb. xii. 9.*

2. The soul is a spirit, *Eccles. xii. 7. The spirit shall return unto God that gave it.*

*Qu. How doth God being a spirit differ from the soul?*

*Servetus* and *Ofiander* thought, that the soul being infused, did convey into man the very



spirit and substance of God; an absurd opinion: for the essence of God is incommunicable.

*Ans.* Therefore, when it is said, the soul is a spirit, it is meant, God hath made it intelligible, and hath stamped upon it his likeness, not his essence.

*Qu.* But is it not said, *That* we are made partakers of the divine nature?

*Ans.* By divine nature there is meant divine qualities, 1 *Pet.* i. 4. We are made partakers of the divine nature, not by identity or union with the divine essence, but by a transformation into the divine likeness. Thus you see how God differs from other spirits, angels and souls of men. He is a spirit of transcendent excellency, the father of spirits.

*Obj.* Against this Vorstius and the Anthropomorphites object, that, in scripture, an human shape and figure is given to God; he is said to have eyes and hands?

*Ans.* It is contrary to the nature of a spirit to have a corporeal substance; *Luke* xxiv. 39. *Handle me, and see me; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* Bodily members are ascribed to God, not properly, but metaphorically, and in a borrowed sense; he is only set out to our capacity: by the right-hand of the Lord is meant his power; by the eyes of the Lord is meant his wisdom. Now that God is a spirit, and is not capable of bodily shape or substance, is clear. 1. A body is visible, but God is invisible; therefore he is a spirit, 1 *Tim.* vi. 16. *whom no man hath seen, nor can see, not by an eye of sense.* 2. A body is terminated, can be but in one place at once; but God is every where, in all places at once; therefore he is a spirit, *Pf.* cxxxix. 7. 8. "God's centre is every where, and his circumference is no where." 3. A Body being compounded of integral parts, may be dissolved; *quicquid divisibile est corruptibile*: but the godhead is not capable of dissolution; he can have no end, from whom all things have their beginning. So that it clearly appears that God is a spirit, which adds to the perfection of his nature.

*Use* 1. If God be a spirit, then he is impassible; he is not capable of being hurt. Wicked men set up their banners, and bend their forces against God; they are said to fight against God, *Acts* v. 39. But what will this fighting avail? What hurt can they do to the Deity? God is a spirit, and therefore cannot receive any hurtful impression: wicked men may imagine evil against the Lord; *Nabum* i. 9. *What*

*do ye imagine against the Lord?* But God, being a spirit, is impenetrable. The wicked may eclipse his glory, but cannot touch his essence. God can hurt his enemies, but they cannot hurt him. *Julian* might throw up his dagger into the air against Heaven, but could not touch the Deity. God is a spirit, invisible. How can the wicked with all their forces hurt him, when they cannot see him? Hence all the attempts of the wicked against God are foolish, and prove abortive; *Pf.* ii. 3, 4. *The kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord, and against his anointed. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh. He is a spirit, he can wound them, but they cannot touch him.*

*Use* 2. If God be a spirit, then it shows the folly of the papists, who worship him by pictures and images. Being a spirit, we cannot make any image to represent him by; *Deut.* iv. 12. *The Lord spake to you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude.*

1. God being a spirit is imperceptible, cannot be discerned; how then can there be any resemblance made of him? *Isa.* xl. 18. *To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?* How can you paint the Deity? Can we make an image of that which we never saw? Ye saw no similitude. God is a spirit. It were a folly to go to make the picture of the soul, because it is a spiritual thing: or to paint the angels, because they are spirits.

*Obj.* Are not the angels in scripture represented by the cherubims?

*Ans.* There is *Imago personæ & officii*; there is the image of the person, and the image that represents the office. The cherubims did not represent the persons of the angels, but their office. The cherubims were made with wings, to show the swiftness of the angels in discharge of their office: and if we cannot picture the soul, nor the persons of angels, because they are spirits, much less can we make an image or picture of God, who is infinite and the father of spirits.

2. God, being a spirit, is omnipresent; he is present in all places, *Jer.* xxiii. 24. *Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.* Therefore, being every where present, it is absurd to worship him by an image: were it not a foolish thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king is present? So to go to worship God's image, when God himself is present.

*Qu.*



*Qu. But how then shall we conceive of God, being a spirit if we may make no image or resemblance of him?*

*Ans.* We must conceive of him spiritually, viz (1.) In his attributes; his holiness, justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. (2.) We must conceive of him as he is in Christ; Christ is the image of the invisible God; Col. i. 15. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ, God-man. In Christ we see some sparklings of the divine glory; in him there is the exact resemblance of all his father's excellencies. The wisdom, love and holiness of God the father shine forth in Christ; John xiv. 9. *He that hath seen me hath seen the father.*

3. *Infer.* If God be a spirit, it shows us, that the more spiritual we grow, the more we grow like to God. How do earth and spirit agree? Phil. iii. 9. Earthly ones may give for their crest, the mole or tortoise that live in the earth. What resemblance is there between an earthly heart, and him who is a spirit? The more spiritual any one is, the more like God.

*Qu. What is it to be spiritual?*

*Ans.* To be refined and sublimated, to have the heart still in heaven, to be thinking of God and glory, and to be carried up in a fiery chariot of love to God; this is to be spiritual: Ps. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in the heaven but thee?* On which Beza paraphraseth thus, *apage terra, utinam tecum in cælo essem!* "O that I were in heaven with thee!" a Christian, who is taken off these earthly things, as the spirits are taken off from the lees, hath a noble spiritual soul, and doth most resemble him who is a spirit.

4. *Infer.* It shows us what that worship is God requires of us, and is most acceptable to him, viz. such a worship as is suitable to his nature, spiritual worship. John iv. 24. *They which worship him, must worship him in spirit and truth.* Spiritual worship is the virgin-worship. Though God will have the service of our bodies, our eyes and hands lifted up, to testify to others that reverence we have of God's glory and majesty, yet chiefly he will have the worship of the soul, 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Glorify God in your body and in your spirit.* Spirit-worship God prizeth, because it comes so near to his own nature who is a spirit.

*Qu. What is it to worship God in the spirit?*

*Ans.* 1. To worship him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God himself

ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date; Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies carnal rites, Heb. ix. 10. and if we may not use those Jewish ceremonies which God did once appoint, then not those which he did never appoint.

*Ans.* 1. To worship God in spirit, is to worship him, (1.) With faith in the blood of the Messiah, Heb. xi. 9. And, (2.) To worship him with the utmost zeal and intenseness of soul, Acts xxvi. 7. *Our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night,* with intenseness of spirit; not only constantly but instantly. This is to worship God in the spirit. The more spiritual any service is, the nearer it comes to God who is a spirit, and the more excellent it is; the spiritual part of the duty is the fat of the sacrifice, it is the soul and quintessence of religion. The richest cordials are made of spirits, and the best duties are such as are of a spiritual nature. God is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit: it is not pomp of worship, but purity which God accepts. Repentance is not in the outward severities used to the body, penance, fasting, and chastising the body, but it consists in the sacrifice of a broken heart: thanksgiving doth not stand in church-music, the melody of an organ, but rather making melody in the heart to the Lord, Eph. v. 19. prayer is not the tuning the voice into an heartless confession, or telling over a few beads, but it consists in sighs and groans. Rom. viii. 26. When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer, now it ascends as a sweet odour; that is the true holy water, not which the pope sprinkles, but what is distilled from the limbeck of a penitent eye. Spirit-worship best pleaseth that God who is a spirit, John iv. 23. *The father seeketh such to worship him;* to shew the great acceptance of such, and how God is delighted with spiritual worship. This is the savoury meat God loves. How few mind this? Worshipping him who is a spirit, in the spirit; they give him more dregs than spirits; they think it enough to bring their duties, but not their hearts, which hath made God disclaim these very services he himself appointed, Isa. i. 12. *Ezek. xxxiii. 31.* Let us then give God spirit-worship, this best suits with his nature; a sovereign elixir full of virtue may be given in a few drops: a little prayer, if it be with the heart and spirit, may have much virtue and efficacy in it. The publican made but a short prayer, *God be mer-*



ciful to me a sinner, Luke xviii. 13. but it was full of life and spirit; it came from the heart, therefore was accepted.

Use 2. *Of exhortation.* Pray to God, that, as he is a spirit, so he will give us of his spirit. The essence of God is incommunicable; but the motions, the presence and influences of his spirit. When the sun shines in a room, not the body of the sun is there, but the light, heat and influence of the sun. God hath made a promise of his spirit, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my spirit within you.* Turn promises into prayers. O Lord, thou who art a spirit give me of thy spirit; I flesh, beg thy spirit, thy enlightning, sanctifying, quickning spirit. Melancthon's prayer, "Lord inflame my soul with thy holy spirit." How needful is his spirit? We cannot do any duty without it in a lively manner: When this wind blows upon our sails, then we move swiftly towards heaven. Pray therefore, that God would give us of the residue of his spirit, Mal. ii. 15. that we may move more vigo-

rously in the sphere of religion.

Use 3. *Of comfort.* As God is a spirit, so the reward that he gives is spiritual; that is the excellency of it. As the chief blessings he gives us in this life are spiritual blessings, Eph. i. 3. not gold and silver; he gives Christ, his love; he fills us with grace: so the main rewards he gives us after this life are spiritual, a crown of glory that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. Earthly crowns fade, but the believer's crown, being spiritual, is immortal, a never-fading crown. *It is impossible* (saith Julius Scaliger) *for that which is spiritual to be subject to change or corruption.* This may comfort a Christian in all his labours and sufferings; he lays out himself for God, and hath little or no reward here; but remember, God, who is a spirit will give spiritual rewards, a sight of his face in heaven, white robes, a weight of glory. Be not then weary of God's service; think of the spiritual reward, a crown of glory which fadeth not away.



## GOD IS INFINITE.

Q. **W**HAT kind of spirit is God?

Ans. He is infinite; so he differs from all created beings, which are finite. Tho' infinite may be applied to all God's attributes, he is infinitely merciful, infinitely wise, infinitely holy; yet, if we take infiniteness properly so, it implies,

1. God's omnipresency; the Greek word for infinite, signifies *without bounds or limits*: God is not confined to any place, he is infinite, and so is present in all places at once. His centre is every where, *Divina essentia nusquam inclusa aut exclusa*, Aug. 1 Kings viii. 27. *Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.* This the Turks have a notion of, they build their temples open on the top, to show that God cannot be confined to their temples, or circumscribed, but is in all places by his presence. God's essence is not limited either to the regions above, or to the terrestrial globe, but his whole essence is every where: this is to be infinite. As philosophers say of the soul, it is, *Tota in tota, & tota in qualibet parte*; the soul is in every part of the body, in

the eye, heart, foot: so we may say of God, he is *ubique*, his essence is *every where*; his circuit is in heaven and in earth, and sea, and he is in all places of his circuit at once: *This is to be infinite.* God, who bounds every thing else, is himself without bounds: he sets bounds to the sea, *Huc usque, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.* He sets bounds to the angels, they, like the cherubims, move and stand at his appointment, Ezek. x. 16, but he is infinite, without bounds. He who can span the heavens, and weigh the earth in a pair of scales, must needs be infinite, Isa. xl. 22.

Obj. *Vorstius, That God is in all places at once, but not in regard of his essence, but, Virtute & potentia, by his virtue and influence; as the body of the sun is in heaven, it only sends forth its beams and influences to the earth; or as a king, who is in all places of his kingdom authoritative, by his power and authority, but he is personally in his throne.*

Ans. But to answer, God, who is infinite, is in all places at once, not only by his influence, but by his essence; for, if his essence fills all places,



places, then he must needs be there in person. But, *Ergo*, minor in, *Jer.* xxiii. 24. *Do not I fill heaven and earth.*

Obj. But, doth not God say, *heaven is his throne?* *Isa.* lxvi. 1.

Ans. It is also said, that an humble heart is his throne, *Isa.* lvii. 15. The humble heart is his throne, in regard of his gracious presence; and heaven is his throne, in regard of his glorious presence; and yet neither of these thrones will hold him, for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.

Object. But if God be infinite in all places, then he is in places impure, and mingles with that impurity?

Ans. Tho' God be in all places, in the heart of a sinner by his inspection, and in hell by his justice, yet he doth not mingle with the impurity, or receive the least tincture of evil. *Divina natura non est immista rebus aut sordibus inquinata*, Aug. No more than the sun shining on a dunghill is defiled, or its beauty spotted, or than Christ going among sinners was defiled, his Godhead was a sufficient antidote against infection.

Reason why God must needs be infinite in all places at once, not only in regard of the simplicity and purity of his nature, but in regard of his power, which being so glorious, who can set him bounds, or prescribe him a circuit to walk in? 'Tis as if the drop should go to limit the ocean, or the star to set the sun its bounds.

Use 1. It condemns the papists, who would make more things infinite than the Godhead: They hold that Christ's body is in many places at once, that it is in heaven, and in the bread and wine in the sacrament. Tho' Christ as he is God is infinite, and in all places at once, yet as man he is not: Christ when he was on earth, his manhood was not in heaven, though his Godhead was; and now he is in heaven, his manhood is not on earth, tho' his Godhead be: *Heb.* x. 5. it is spoken of Christ, *A body hast thou prepared me.* This body cannot be in all places at once; for then it is no more a body, but a spirit; Christ's body in heaven, though it be glorified, it is not deified; it is not infinite, for so it must be, if it be both in heaven, and in the bread and wine by transubstantiation.

If God be infinite, present in all places at once, then it is certain he governs all things in his own person; he needs no proxies or deputies to help him to carry on his government.

He is in all places at an instant, and manageth all affairs both in the earth and heaven. A king cannot be in all places of his kingdom in his own person, therefore he is fain to govern by deputies and vicegerents, and they often pervert justice; but God, being infinite, needs no deputies, he is present in all places, he sees all with his own eyes, and hears all with his own ears; he is every where in his own person, therefore is fit to be the judge of the world, he will do every one right.

If God be infinite by his omnipresence, then see the greatness and immenseness of the divine Majesty! What a great God do we serve? *1 Chron.* xxix. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the glory, and the majesty, and thou art exalted as head above all.* Well may the scripture display the greatness of his glory, who is infinite in all places. He transcends our weak conceptions; how can our finite understanding comprehend him who is infinite? He is infinitely above all our praises, *Neb.* ix. 5. *Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.* O what a poor nothing is man, when we think of God's infiniteness! As the stars disappear at the rising of the sun, O how doth man shrink into nothing, when infinite Majesty shines forth in his glory! *Isa.* xl. 15. *The nations are as a drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance.* O what a little of that drop are we! The heathens thought they had sufficiently praised *Jupiter*, when they called him *Great Jupiter*. Of what immense majesty is God, who fills all places at once? His excellent greatness, *Psa.* cl. 2. If God be infinite, filling heaven and earth, see what a full portion the saints have, they have him for their portion, who is infinite. His fulness is an infinite fulness; and he is infinitely sweet as well as infinitely full: if a conduit be filled with wine, here is a sweet fulness, but still it is finite; but God is a sweet fulness, and it is an infinite. He is infinitely full of beauty, of love; his riches are called unsearchable, *Eph.* iii. 8. because they are infinite. Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there's that in God exceeds: it is an infinite fulness. He is said to do abundantly for us, above all that we can ask, *Eph.* iii. 20. What cannot an ambitious spirit ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms, millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, because he is infinite, nay, or think: we can think, what if all the dust were turned to silver,



ver, if every flower were a ruby, every sand in the sea a diamond: yet God can give more than we can think, because he is infinite! O how rich are they who have the infinite God for their portion! Well might *David* say, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage*, Psal. xvi. 5, 6. We may go with the bee, from flower to flower, but we shall never have full satisfaction till we come to the infinite God. *Jacob* said, *I have enough*; in Hebrew, "I have all," Gen. xxxiii. 11. because he had the infinite God for his portion. God being an infinite fulness, there is no fear of want for any of the heirs of heaven; tho' there be millions of saints and angels, which have a share in God's riches, yet he hath enough for them all, because he is infinite. Tho' a thousand men behold the sun, there is light enough in the sun for them all: put never so many buckets into the sea, there is water enough in the sea to fill them. Tho' an innumerable company of saints and angels are to be filled out of God's fulness, yet God being infinite, he hath abundantly enough to satisfy them. God hath land enough to give to all his heirs, there can be no want in that which is infinite.

If God be infinite, he fills all places, is every where present; this is sad to the wicked, God is their enemy, and they cannot escape him, nor flee from him, for he is every where present: they are never out of his eye, nor out of his reach, Psal. xxi. 8. *Thy hand shall find out all thy enemies*. What caves or thickets can men hide in that God cannot find them: go where they will, he is present, Psal. cxxxix. 7. *Whither shall I fly from thy presence?* If a man owes a debt to another, he may make some escape, and flee into another land where the creditor cannot find him; *But whither shall I flee from thy presence?* God is infinite, he is in all places; so that he will find out his enemies, and punish them.

*Obj.* But is it not said, *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord*, Gen. iv. 16.

*Ans.* The meaning is, he went out from the church of God, where were the visible signs of God's presence, and where God did in a special manner, manifest his sweet presence to his people: but *Cain* could not go out of God's sight; for God, being infinite, is every where present. Sinners can neither go from an accusing conscience, nor a revenging God.

If God be every where present, then for a Christian to walk with God is not impossible. God is not only in heaven, but he is on earth too, *Isa.* lvi. 1. Heaven is his throne, there he sits; the earth is his footstool, there he stands. He is every where present, therefore we may come to walk with God: *Enoch walked with God*, Gen. v. 22. If God were confined to heaven, a trembling soul might think, How can I converse with God, how can I walk with him who lives in *Excelsis*, above the upper region? But God is not confined to heaven, he is omnipresent; he is above us, yet he is about us, he is near to us, *Acts* xvii. 27. *Tho' he be not far from the assembly of his saints. He stands in the congregation of the mighty*, Psal. lxxxii. 1. He is present with us, God is in every one of us; so that here on earth we may walk with God. In heaven the saints rest with him, on earth they walk with him. To walk with God, is to walk by faith; we are said to draw nigh to God, *Heb.* x. 22. and to see him, *Heb.* xi. 27. *As seeing him who is invisible*; and to have fellowship with him, *Hos.* i. 3. *Our fellowship is with the Father*. Thus we may take a turn with him every day by faith: (It is a slighting of God, not to walk with him: if a king be in presence, it is a slighting him, to neglect him, and walk with the page) there's no walk in the world so sweet as to walk with God: *Ps.* lxxxix. 15. *They shall walk in the light of thy countenance*. Psal. cxxxviii. 5. *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord; it is like walking among beds of spices, which send forth a fragrant perfume*.

*Use.* 2. If God be infinite in his glorious essence, learn to admire where you cannot fathom. The angels wear a vail, they cover their faces, as adoring this infinite majesty, *Isa.* vi. 3. *Elias* wrapped himself in a mantle when God's glory passed by. Admire where you cannot fathom, *Job* xi. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God?* Here we see some beams of his glory, we see him in the glass of the creation, we see him in his picture, his image shines in the saints; but who can search out all his essential glory? What angel can measure these pyramids? *Canst thou by searching find out God?* He is infinite. We can no more search out his infinite perfections, than a man upon the top of the highest mountain can reach the firmament, or take a star in his hand. O have God-admiring thoughts! Adore where you cannot fathom: there are many mysteries in



in nature which we cannot fathom; why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it; why *Nilus* should overflow in summer, when by the course of nature the waters are lowest; how the bones grow in the womb; *Ecc. xi. 5.* If these things pose us, how may the infinite mystery of the Deity transcend our most raised intellectuals! Ask the geometrician, if he can with a pair of compasses measure the breadth of the earth. So unable are we to measure the infinite perfections of God. In heaven we shall see God clearly, but not fully, for he is infinite: he will communicate himself to us according to the bigness of our vessel, but not the immensity of his nature. Adore then, where you cannot fathom.

If God be infinite in all places, then let us not go to limit God, *Psal. lxxviii. 41. They limited the holy One of Israel.* It is a limiting

God, to confine him within the narrow compass of our reason. Reason thinks God must go such a way to work, or the business will never be effected. This is to limit God to our reason; whereas he is infinite, and his ways are past finding out, *Rom. xi. 33.* In the deliverance of the church, it is a limiting God, either to set him a time, or prescribe him a method for deliverance. God will deliver *Sion*, but he will be left to his own liberty; he will not be tied to a place, to a time, to an instrument: this were to limit him, and then he should not be infinite. God will go his own way, he will pose and nonplus reason, he will work by improbabilities, he will save in such a way, as we think he will destroy; now he acts like himself, like an infinite wonder-working God.



## OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

**F**OR the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed, *1 Sam. ii. 3.* Glorious things are spoken of God; he transcends our thoughts, and the angels praise. God's glory lies chiefly in his attributes, which are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth. Among other of his orient excellencies, this is not the least, *The Lord is a God of knowledge;* or, as the Hebrew word is, "A God of knowledges." Thro' the bright mirror of his own essence, he hath a full idea and cognisance of all things; the world is to him, a transparent body. He makes an heart-anatomy; *Rev. ii. 23. I am he which searcheth the reins and the heart.* The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to draw between us and his sight, *Psal. cxxxix. 12. The darkness hideth not from thee.* There is not a word we whisper, but God hears it, *Pf. cxxxix. 4. There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.* There is not the most subtil thought comes into our mind, but God perceives it, *Isa. lxxv. 18. I know their thoughts.* Thoughts speak as loud in God's ears, as words do in ours. All our actions, tho' never so subtilly contrived, and secretly conveyed, are visible to the eye of omniscieny: *Isa. lxvi. 18. I know their works.*

*Achan* hid the *Babylonish* garment in the earth, but God brought it to light, *Josh. vii. 21. Minerva*, was drawn in such curious colours, and so lively pensil'd, that which way soever one turn'd, *Minerva's* eyes were upon him; so, which way soever we turn ourselves, still God's eye is upon us, *Job xxvii. 16. Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds; the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge?* God knows whatever is knowable, he knows future contingencies. He foretold *Israel's* coming out of *Babylon*, and the virgin's conceiving. By this the Lord proves the truth of his God-head against idol-gods, *Isa. xli. 23. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know ye are gods.* The perfection of God's knowledge is, that it cannot be searched out to perfection, *Job xi. 7.* What angel can reach the top of these pyramids? But, (1.) God's knowledge is *primary*. He is the original, the pattern, and prototype of all knowledge; others borrow their knowledge of him; the angels light their lamps at this glorious sun. (2.) God's knowledge is *pure*. It is not contaminated with the object. *Divina natura non est immista rebus aut sordibus inquinata*, Aug. Tho' God knows sin, yet it is to hate and punish it. No evil can mix or incorporate with



his knowledge, no more than the sun can be defiled with the vapours which arise from the earth. (3.) God's knowledge is *facile*; it is without any difficulty. We study and search for knowledge, *Prov. ii. 4. If thou seekest for her as for silver.* But the lamp of God's knowledge is so infinitely bright, that all things are intelligible to him.

(4.) God's knowledge is *infallible*; there is no mistake in his knowledge. Human knowledge is subject to error and misprision. A physician may mistake the cause of a disease; but God's knowledge is unerring; he can neither deceive nor be deceived: he cannot deceive, because he is truth; nor be deceived, because he is wisdom. (5.) God's knowledge is *instantaneous*. Our knowledge is successive, one thing after another. We argue from the effect to the cause. God knows things past, present, and to come, *uno intuitu*, at once, they are all before him in one infinite prospect.

(1.) God's knowledge is *retentive*; he never loseth any of his knowledge; he hath *Reminiscencia*, as well as *Intelligentia*; he remembers as well as understands. Many things elapse out of our mind, but God's knowledge is eternized. Things transacted a thousand years ago, are as fresh to him, as if they were done but the last minute. Thus he is perfect in knowledge.

*Obj.* But is it not said, *Gen. xviii. 21. I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry which is come up unto me, and I will know?*

*Ans.* It could not be a nesciency, or that God was ignorant; because there is mention made of a cry; but the Lord speaks there after the manner of a judge, who will first examine the cause before he passeth the sentence. God, when he is upon a work of justice, is not in a riot, as if he did not care where he hits; but he goes on in a way of a circuit against offenders. *He lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, Isa. xxviii. 17.*

*Obj.* *Hos. xiii. 3. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, their sin is hid?*

*Ans.* Not that his sin was hid from God, but his sin is hid, that is, it is recorded, it is laid up against a day of reckoning. That this is the meaning, is clear by the foregoing words, his iniquity is bound up: as the clerk of the assizes binds up the indictments of malefactors in a bundle, and at the assizes brings out the indictments, and reads them in court;

so God binds up men's sins in a bundle, and at the day of judgment this bundle shall be opened, and all their sins brought to light before men and angels.

That God is thus infinite in his knowledge, 1. It cannot but be so: for he who is the original cause, and gives a being to things, must needs have a clear inspection into them, *Psal. xciv. 9. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?* He who makes a watch or engine, knows all the workmanship in it. God, that made the heart, knows all the motions and fallacies of it. He is like *Ezekiel's* wheels, *full of eyes*, and, as *Austin* saith, *Totus oculus*, "All eye." 2. It ought to be so: for he is to be *Judge of all the world*, *Gen. xviii. 25.* There are so many causes to be brought before him, and so many persons to be tried, that he must have a most exquisite perfect knowledge, or he could not do justice. An ordinary judge cannot proceed without a jury, the jury must search the cause, and give in their verdict; but God can judge without a jury. He knows all things in and of himself, and needs no witnesses to inform him. A judge judgeth only matters of fact, but God judgeth the heart. He not only judgeth wicked actions, but wicked designs. He sees the treason of the heart, and punisheth it.

*Use 1.* Is God infinite in knowledge, 1 *John i. 5. He is light, and in him is no darkness*; then how unlike are they to God, who are darkness, and in them is no light, who are destitute of knowledge, such as the Indians who never heard of God? And are there not many among us, who are no better than baptized heathens? who are to seek in the first principles of the oracles of God. It is sad, that after the sun of the gospel hath shined so long in our horizon, yet to this day the veil should be upon their heart. Such as are enveloped with ignorance, cannot give God a reasonable service. *Rom. xii. 1. Ignorance is the nurse of impiety*: The schoolmen say, *Omne peccatum fundatur in ignorantia*. *Jer. ix. 3. They proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, saith the Lord.* Where ignorance reigns in the understanding, lust rageth in the affections; *Prov. xix. 2. That the mind be without knowledge, it is not good*; neither faith nor fear: no faith; for knowledge carries the torch before faith, *Psal. ix. 10. They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.* A man can



no more believe without knowledge, than the eye can see without light. Nor fear of God; how can they fear him whom they do not know? The covering of *Human* face was a sad preface of death. When people's minds are covered with ignorance, this covering of the face is a fatal fore-runner of destruction.

2. If God be a God of knowledge, then flee the folly of hypocrisy. Hypocrites do not *virtutem facere*, but *ingere*. Melanct. They carry it fair with men, but care not how bad their hearts are; they live in secret sin, *Pf. lxxiii. 11. They say, how doth God know? Pf. x. 11. God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it.* But, *Pf. cxlvii. v. His understanding is infinite.* He hath a grate (*crates*) that looks into mens breasts, he hath a key for the heart, he beholds all the sinful workings of mens spirits: as in a glass-hive we can see the bees working in their combs, *Mat. vi. 4. he sees in secret; in impios habet, Rivet.* As a merchant enters down debts in his book, so God hath his diary or day-book, and he enters down every sin into the book: he makes a critical descant upon mens actions. *Jeroboam's* wife disguised herself, that the prophet should not know her; but he discerned her, *1 Kings xiv. 6. Why feignest thou thyself to be another?* The hypocrite thinks to prevaricate and juggle with God, but God will unmask him, *Eccl. xii. 14. God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.* *Jer. xxix. 32. They have committed villany in Israel, even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.* Ay but the hypocrite hopes he shall colour over his sin, and makes it look very specious. *Abshalom* masks over his treason with the pretence of a religious vow. *Judas* dissembles his envy at Christ, and covetousness, with a pretence of *charity to the poor*, *John xii. 5. Jehu* makes religion a stirrup to his ambitious design, *1 Kings x. 16.* But God sees through these fig-leaves. You may see a jade under his guilt trappings, *Jer. xvi. 17. Their iniquities are not hid from mine eyes.* And he that hath an eye to see, will find an hand to punish.

Use 2. *Of exhortation.* Is God so infinite in his knowledge? Then we should always set ourselves as under his omniscient eye. *Sic vivendum est tanquam in conspectu*, *Seneca.* Let us set *David's* prospect before our eye, *Pf. xvi. 8. I have set the Lord always before me.* *Seneca* counselled *Lucilius*, that whatever he was doing, he should imagine some of the

Roman worthies before him, and then he would do nothing dishonourable. The consideration of God's omniscience would, 1. Be preventive of much sin. The eye of man will restrain from sin; and will not God's eyes much more? *Esth. vii. 8. Will he force the queen before me, when I stand and look on?* Will we sin when our judge looks on? Would men speak so vainly, if they considered God over-heard them? *Latimer* took heed to every word in his examination, when he heard the pen go behind the hangings: so, what care would persons have of their words, if they remembered God heard, and the pen is going in heaven? would men go after strange flesh, if they believed God were a spectator of their wickedness, and would make them do penance in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings, and use false weights, if they thought God saw them, and for making their weights lighter would make their damnation heavier? 2. The setting ourselves as under the eye of God's omniscience, would cause reverence in the worship of God. God sees the frame and carriage of our hearts when we come before him: how would this call in our stragling thoughts? How would this animate and spirit duty? It would make us put fire to the incense, *Acts xxvi. 7. The tribes instantly served God day and night, omnibus venibus*, with the utmost zeal and intenseness of spirit. To think God is in this place, he beholds us, would add wings to prayer, and oil to the flame of our devotion.

2. Is God's knowledge infinite! Study sincerity, be what you seem, *1 Sam. xvi. 7. The Lord looketh upon the heart.* Men judge of the heart by the actions, God judgeth of the actions by the heart: if the heart be sincere, God will see the faith, and wink at the failing. *Aha* had his blemishes, but his heart was right with God, *2 Chron. xv. 17.* God saw his sincerity, and pardoned his infirmity. Sincerity in a Christian, is like chastity in a wife, which doth excuse many failings. Sincerity makes our duties acceptable, like musk among linen, that perfumes it. As *Jehu* said to *Jehonadab*, *2 Kings x. 13. Is thy heart right with me? And he said, It is. If it be, saith he, give me thy hand; and he took him up into the chariot: so, if God see our heart is right, that we love him, and design his glory, now saith he, give me your prayers and tears; now you shall come up with me into the triumphant chariot of glory. Sincerity makes our*



services to be golden, and God will not cast away this gold tho' it may want some weight. Is God omniscient, and his eye chiefly upon the heart? wear this girdle of truth about you and never leave it off.

*Use 3. Of comfort.* Is God a God of infinite knowledge? Then there is comfort, 1. To the saints in particular, 2. To the church in general, in three respects.

1. In case of private devotion. Christian, thou settest hours apart for God, thy thoughts run upon him as thy treasure: God takes notice of every good thought, *Mal. iii. 17.* He had a book of remembrance written for them that thought upon his name. Thou enterest into thy closet, and prayest to thy father in secret; he hears every sigh and groan, *Pf. xxxviii. 9.* *My groaning is not hid from thee.* Thou waterest the seed of thy prayer with tears, God bottles every tear, *Pf. lvi. 8.* *Put thou my tears into thy bottle.* When the secrets of all hearts shall be opened, God will make an honourable mention of the zeal and devotion of his people, and he himself will be the herald of their praises, *1 Cor. iv. 5.* *Then shall every man have praise of God.*

2. The infiniteness of God's knowledge is a comfort, in case the saints have not so clear a knowledge of themselves. They find so much corruption, that they judge they have no grace, *Gen. xxv. 22* *If it be so, why am I thus?* If I have grace, why is my heart in so dead and earthly a frame? O remember, God is of infinite knowledge, he can spy grace where thou canst not; he can see grace hid under corruption, as the stars may be hid under a cloud. God can see that holiness in thee which thou canst not discern in thy self: he can spy the flower of grace in thee, though overtopped with weeds, *1 Kings xiv. 13.* *Because there is in him some good thing.* God sees some good thing in his people, when they can see no good

in themselves; and though they judge themselves, he will give them an absolution.

3. It is comfort in respect of personal injuries. It is the saints lot to suffer; the head being crowned with thorn, the feet must not tread upon roses. If saint find a real purgatory, it is in this life; but this is the comfort, God sees what wrong is done to them; the apple of his eye is touched, and is not he sensible? *St. Paul* was scourged by cruel hands, *1 Cor. xi. 35.* *Thrice was I beaten with rods;* as if you should see a scullion whip the king's son. God beholds it, *Exod. iii. 7.* *I know their arrows.* The wicked make wounds in the backs of the saints, and then pour in vinegar; God writes down their cruelty. Believers are part of Christ's mystical body; and for ever drop of a saint's blood spilt, God puts a drop of wrath in his vial.

2. Comfort to the church of God in general. If God be a God of knowledge, he sees all the plots of the enemies against *Sion*, and can make them prove abortive. The wicked are subtle, having borrowed their skill of the old serpent; they dig deep to hide their counsels from God, but he sees them, and can easily counterwork them. The dragon is described with seven heads, *Rev. xii. 3.* to shew how he plots against the church: but God is described with *seven eyes*, *Zach. iii. 9.* to shew, that he sees all the plots and stratagems of the enemies; and when they deal proudly, he can be above them. *Come, saith Pharaoh, let us deal wisely,* *Exod. i. 10.* and he never played the fool more than when he thought to deal wisely, *Exod. xiv. 23.* *In the morning-watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, by the pillar of fire, and troubled the host.* How may this be as sap in the vine, and may comfort the church of God in her militant state? The Lord hath an eye in all the councils and combinations of the enemy; he sees them lay their train, and can blow them up in their own mine.

## OF THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

THE next attribute is, *God is eternal*, *Pf. xc. 2.* *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* The school-men distinguish between *ævum* & *eternum*, to explain the notion of eternity. There is a three-fold being, 1.

Such a being as had a beginning, and shall have an end: so all sensitive creatures, the beasts, fowls, fishes; these at death are destroyed, and return to dust, their being ends with their life. 2. Such a being as had a beginning, but shall

shall have no end, as the angels and souls of men; they are eternal *a parte post*, they abide for ever. 3. Such a being as is without beginning, and without ending, and that is proper only to God. He is *semper existens*, viz. from everlasting to everlasting; it is God's title, a jewel of his crown. (1.) He is called *the king eternal*, 1 Tim. i. 17. (2.) *Jehovah*, a word that properly sets out God's eternity; a word so dreadful, that the Jews trembled to name or read it, therefore used another word, *Adonai* Lord. *Jehovah* contains in it time past, present, and to come, Rev. i. 14. *Which is and which was, and which is to come*; it interprets the word *Jehovah*. *Which is* He subsists of himself, having a pure and independent being. *Which was* God only was before time. There is no searching into the records of eternity. *Which is to come* His kingdom hath no end: his crown hath no successors, Heb. i. 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. The doubling of the word ratifies the certainty of it, as the doubling of *Pharaoh's* dream did. I shall prove that God only could be eternal, without beginning. Angels could not, they are but creatures, though spirits; they were made, and therefore their beginning may be known, their antiquity may be searched into: if you ask, when were they created? Some think before the world was; but not so: for what was before time was eternal: the angels first rise and original reacheth no higher than the beginning of the world. It is thought by the learned, that the angels were made that day on which the heavens were made, Job xxxviii. 7. *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*. St. Hierom, Gregory, and venerable Bede, understand it of the angels, when God laid the foundation-stone of the world, the angels being then created, did sing the anthems of joy and praise; the angels could not be before time, for what was before time was eternal. It is only proper to God to be eternal, without beginning: He is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last, Rev. i. 8. No creature can write itself *Alpha*, that is only a flower of the crown of heaven, Exod. vi. 14. *I am that I am*, viz. He who exists from and to eternity.

Use 1. Here is thunder and lightning to the wicked; God is eternal, therefore the torments of the wicked are eternal. God lives for ever; and as long as God lives he will be punishing the damned----This, me-thinks, should be as that hand-writing upon the wall, Dan. v. 6.

it should *make their joys to be lost*, &c. The sinner takes liberty to sin, he breaks God's laws, like a wild beast that breaks over the hedge, and leaps into forbidden pasture; he sins with greediness, Eph. iv. 19. as if he thought he could not sin fast enough. But remember, this is one of God's names, Eternal; and as long as God is eternal, he hath time enough to reckon with all his enemies. To make sinners tremble, let them think of these three things; the torments of the damned are without Intermission, without Mixture, and Eternal.

1. Without *Intermission*. Their pains shall be acute and sharp, and no relaxation; the fire shall not be slackned or abated, Rev. xiv. 10. *They have no rest day nor night*; like one that hath his joints stretched continually on the rack, and hath no ease: therefore the wrath of God is compared to a stream of brimstone, Isa. xxx. 33. Why to a stream? Because a stream runs without intermission; it runs, and doth not stop: so God's wrath runs like a stream, and pours out without any intermission. In the pains of this life, there is some abatement and intermission; the fever abates, after a fit of the stone the patient hath some ease: but the pains of hell are intense and violent, *in summo gradu*; the damned soul never saith, I am now more at ease.

2. Without *Mixture*. Hell is a place of pure justice. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy, he mixeth compassion with suffering, Deut. xxxiii. 25. *After's* shoe was of iron, but his foot was dipt in oil. Affliction is the iron-shoe, but mercy is mixed with it; here is the foot dipt in oil. But the torments of the damned have no mixture, Rev. xiv. 10. *They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture*. No mixture of mercy. How is the cup of wrath said to be full of mixture, Ps. lxxv. 8. *The wine is red, it is full of mixture*; yet in the Revelation it is said to be without mixture? It is full of mixture, that is, it is full of all the ingredients that may make it bitter; the worm, the fire, the curse of God, all these are bitter ingredients. It is a cup mixed, yet it is without mixture, viz. there shall be nothing to afford the least comfort, no mixture of mercy; so it is a cup without mixture. In the sacrifice of jealousy, Numb. v. 15. there was no oil put to it; so, in the torments of the damned, there is no oil of mercy to abate their sufferings.

3. Without *Cessation, eternal*. The pleasures of



of sin are but for a season, but the torments of the wicked are for ever. Sinners have a short *fast*, but a long reckoning. *Origen* erroneously thought, that after a thousand years the damned should be released out of their misery: but the worm, the fire, the prison are all eternal, *Rev. xv. 11. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Pœnæ gehennales puniunt, non finiunt*, *Prosper*. Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity wasted; and the damned must be ever burning, but never consuming, always dying, but never dead, *Rev. ix. 6. They shall seek death, but shall not find it*. The fire of hell is such, as multitude of tears will not quench it, length of time will not finish it; the vial of God's wrath will be always dropping upon a sinner. As long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon the wicked. O eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depth of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, *Isa. xxx. 33*. and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire? O eternity! If all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousandth year, and fetch away in her bill, but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what a numberless number of years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetcht away? Yet if at the end of all that time the sinner might come out of hell (tho' long) yet there would be some hope: but this word *Ever*, breaks the heart, *The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever*. What a terror is this to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think, as long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon sinners!

*Qu.* Here a question may be moved, *Why sin, that is committed in a short time, should be punished eternally?*

*An.* We must hold with *St. Augustine*, "that God's judgments on the wicked, *occulta esse possunt, injusta esse non possunt*, may be secret, but never unjust." The reason why sin committed in a short time is eternally punished, is, because every sin is committed against an infinite essence, and no less than eternity of punishment can satisfy. Why is treason punished with

confiscation and death, but because it is against the king's person, which is sacred? much more that offence which is against God's crown and dignity, is of an hainous and infinite nature, and cannot be satisfied with less than eternal punishment.

*Use 2.* Of comfort to the godly: God is eternal, therefore lives for ever to reward the godly, *Rom. ii. 7. To them who seek for glory, and honour; eternal life*. The people of God here are in a suffering condition, *Acts xx. 23. Bonds and afflictions abide me*. The head being crowned with thorns, the feet must not tread upon roses. The wicked are clad in purple, and fare deliciously, while the godly suffer. Goats climb upon the high mountains, while Christ's sheep are in the valley of slaughter. But here is the comfort, God is eternal, and he hath appointed eternal recompences for the saints: in heaven are fresh delights, sweetness without surfeit; and that which is the crown and zenith of heaven's happiness, is, it is *eternal*, *1 John ii. 25*. Were there but the least suspicion that this glory must cease, it would much eclipse, yea imbitter it: but it is eternal. What angel can span eternity? *2 Cor. iv. 17. An eternal weight of glory*. The saints shall bathe themselves in the rivers of divine pleasure; and these rivers can never be dried up, *Psa. xvi. 11. At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore*. This is the *Elah*, the highest strain in the apostle's rhetoric, *1 Thess. iv. 17. Ever with the Lord*. There is peace without trouble, ease without pain, glory without end, *ever with the Lord*. Let this comfort the saints in all their troubles; their sufferings are but short, but their reward is eternal. Eternity makes heaven to be heaven; 'tis the diamond to the ring: O blessed day, that shall have no night! the sun-light of glory shall rise upon the soul, and never set! O blessed spring, that shall have no autumn, or fall of the leaf! the *Roman* emperors have three crowns set upon their heads, the first of iron, the second of silver, the third of gold: so the Lord sets three crowns on his children, grace, comfort, and glory; and this crown is eternal, *1 Pet. v. 4. Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*. The wicked have a never-dying worm, and the godly a never-fading crown. O how should this be a spur to virtue! How willing should we be to work for God? Tho' we had nothing here, God hath time enough

enough to reward his people; the crown of eternity shall be set upon their head.

*Use 3.* Of exhortation. 1. In general, study eternity. Our thoughts should chiefly run upon eternity. We are all for the present, something that may delight the senses. If we could have lived (as *Augustine* saith) *a cunabulis mundi*, from the infancy of the world to the world's old age, what were this? What is time, measured with eternity? As the earth is but a small point to the heaven, so time is but, nay scarce a minute to eternity! *Annos æternos in mente habet*: Brethren, we are every day travelling to eternity: and whether we wake or sleep, we are going our journey; some of us are upon the borders of eternity. O study the shortness of life and the length of eternity.

2. More particularly; think of God's eternity, and the soul's eternity. 1. Think of God's eternity. He is the Ancient of days, who was before all time. There is a figurative description of God, *Dan. vii. 9. The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool.* His white garment, wherewith he was clothed, signified his majesty; his hair like the pure wool his holiness; and the ancient of days, his eternity. The thoughts of God's eternity would make us have high adoring thoughts of God. We are apt to have mean, irreverent thoughts of him, *Psa. l. 21. Thou thoughtest I was such an one as thyself*; weak and mortal, but if we would think on God's eternity, when all power ceaseth, he is King eternal, his crown flourisheth for ever, who can make us happy or miserable for ever, this would make us have adoring thoughts of God; *Rev. iv. 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.* The saints fall down, to signify by that humble posture, that they are not worthy to sit in God's presence. They fall down and they worship him that liveth for ever and ever; they do as it were kiss his feet, and they cast their crowns before the throne, they lay all their honour at his feet: thus they shew humble adoration to the eternal essence. Study God's eternity, it will make us adore where we cannot fathom. 2. Think of the soul's eternity. As God is eternal, so he hath

made us eternal. We are never-dying creatures; we are shortly entering upon an eternal state, either of happiness or misery. Have serious thoughts of this: say, O my soul, which of these two eternities is like to be thy portion? I must shortly depart hence, and whither then shall I go, to which of these eternities, either of glory or misery? The serious meditation of the eternal state we are to pass into, would work strongly with us.

1. Thoughts of eternal torments are a good antidote against sin; sin tempts with its pleasure; but when we think of eternity, it may cool the intemperate heat of lust. Shall I, for the pleasure of sin for a season, endure eternal pain? Sin, like those locusts, *Rev. ix. 7.* seems to have on its head a crown like gold, but it hath in it a tail like a scorpion, *ver. 10.* and a sting in its tail, and this sting can never be plucked out. Shall I venture eternal wrath? Is sin committed so sweet, as lying in hell for ever is bitter? This would make us flee from sin, as *Moses* from the serpent.

2. The serious thoughts of eternal happiness would very much take us off from these worldly things; we should not esteem much of them: what are these sublunary things to eternity? they are quickly gone, they salute us, and take their farewell. But I am to enter upon an everlasting estate; I hope to live with him who is eternal: what is the world to me? They who stand upon the top of the *Alps*, the great cities of *Campania* seem as small things in their eyes; so he who hath his thoughts fixed on his eternal state after this life, all these things seem as nothing in his eye. What is the glory of this world? how poor and contemptible, compared with an eternal weight of glory?

3. To conclude; The serious thoughts of an eternal state, either of happiness or misery, would have a powerful influence upon whatsoever we take in hand: every work we do, promotes either a blessed or cursed eternity; every good action sets us a step nearer to an eternity of happiness; every bad action sets us a step nearer to an eternity of misery. O what influence would the thoughts of eternity have upon our religious duties? It would make us do them with all our might: a duty well performed, lifts a Christian higher towards heaven, and sets a Christian a step nearer to a blessed eternity.



## GOD'S UNCHANGEABLENESS.

THE next attribute is God's unchangeableness, *Mal. iii. 6. I am Jehovah, I change not.* 1. God is unchangeable in his nature. 2. In his decree.

1st, Unchangeable in his nature: 1. There is no eclipse of his brightness. 2. No period put to his being.

1. No eclipse of his brightness: his essence shines with a fixed lustre, *James i. 17. With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* *Pf. cxx. 27. Thou art the same.* All created things are full of vicissitude: 1. Princes and emperors are subject to mutation. *Sesostris*, an Egyptian prince, having subdued divers kings in war, made them draw like horses in his chariot, as if he intended to turn them to eat grass, as God did king *Nebuchadnezzar*. The crown hath many successors. 2. Kingdoms have their eclipses and convulsions: what is become of the glory of *Athens*? The pomp of *Troy*? *Jam seges est ubi Troja fuit.* Kingdoms, tho' they have a head of gold, yet feet of clay. 3. The heavens change, *Pf. cii. 26. As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.* The matter of the elements, as it is more pure, so more firm and solid; the heavens are the most ancient records, where God hath written his glory with a sun-beam, yet these shall change; tho' I do not think they shall be destroyed as to their substance, yet they shall be changed as to their qualities; they shall melt with fervent heat, *2 Pet. iii. 12.* and so be more refin'd and purified. Thus the heavens shall be changed, but not he who dwells in heaven; *With him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.* 4. The best saints have their eclipses and changes. Look upon a Christian in his spiritual estate, and he is full of variation: Tho' the seed of grace doth not die, yet the beauty and activity of it doth often wither. A Christian hath his anguish fits in religion; sometimes his faith is at an high tide, sometimes low ebb; sometimes his love flames, and at another time like fire in the embers, and he hath lost his first love. How strong was *David's* grace at one time? *2 Sam. xxii. 3. The God of my rock, in him will I trust.* And at another time, *I shall one*

*day perish by the hand of Saul.* What Christian can say, he doth not find a change in his graces; that the bow of his faith doth never unbend, the strings of his viol do never slacken? Sure we shall never meet with such Christians, till we meet them in heaven. But God is without any shadow of turning. 5. The angels were subject to change; they were created holy, but mutable, *Jude 6. The angels which kept not their first estate.* These morning-stars of heaven were falling-stars. But God's glory shines with a fixed brightness: In God there is nothing looks like a change, no better or worse; no better in him, because then he were not perfect; nor worse in him, for then he should cease to be perfect: he is immutably holy, immutably good; there is no shadow of change in him.

Obj. *Christ, who is God, assumed the human nature; here was a change.*

Ans. If indeed the divine nature had been converted into the human, or the human into the divine, here had been a change, but not so. The human nature was distinct from the divine, therefore there was no change. As suppose a cloud cover the sun, this makes no change in the body of the sun; so, tho' the divine nature be covered with the human, this makes no change in the divine nature.

2d, There is no period put to his being; *1 Tim. vi. 16. Who only hath immortality.* The Godhead cannot die: 1. An infinite essence cannot be changed into a finite; but God is infinite. 2. He is eternal, ergo, he is not mortal; to be eternal, and mortal, is a contradiction.

Use 1. See here the excellency of the divine nature in its immutability: this is the glory of the Godhead. Mutableness denotes weakness; it is not so in God, he is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever, *Heb. xiii. 8.* Men are fickle and mutable, like *Reuben, unstable as water*, *Gen. xlix. 4.* They go in changeable colours;

1. They are changeable in their principles, (sometimes protestant, sometimes papist) if their faces altered as fast as their opinions, we should not know them.

2. Changeable in their resolutions; like the wind

wind that blows in the east, presently turns about to the west. They resolve to be virtuous, but quickly repent of their resolutions: their minds are like a sick man's pulse, alters every half-hour; these the apostle compares to waves of the sea, and wandering stars, *Jude* 13. they are not pillars in God's temple, but reeds.

3. Others are changeable in their friendship, quickly love, and quickly hate; sometimes will put you in their bosom, then excommunicate you out of their favour; thus they change as the camellion, into several colours. But God is immutable.

*Use 2.* See the vanity of the creature; there are changes in every thing but in God, *Pf. lxi. 9. Men of high degree are vanity, and men of low degree are a lie.* We look for more from the creature, than God hath put into it. The world rings changes; the creature hath two evils in it, it promiseth more than we find, and it fails us when we most need it: there is a failure in *omni*. A man desires to have his corn grinded, the water fails, and then his mill cannot go; the mariner is for a voyage, the wind either doth not blow, or is contrary, and he cannot sail; one depends upon another for the payment of a promise, and he fails, and is like a foot out of joint. Who would look for a fixed stability in the vain creature! As if one should build houses on the sand, where the sea comes in and overflows. The creature is true to nothing but deceit, and is constant only in its disappointments. 'Tis no more wonder to see changes fall out here below, than to see the moon dressing itself in a new shape and figure; look to meet with changes in every thing but God.

*Use 3. Comfort to the godly, 1.* In case of losses, if an estate be almost boil'd away to nothing; if lose dear friends by death, here is a double eclipse; but this is the comfort, God is unchangeable: I may lose these things, but I cannot lose my God, he never dies. When the fig-tree, and olive-tree failed, yet God did not fail, *Hab. iii. 18. I will joy in the God of my salvation.* The flowers in the garden die, but a man's portion remains: so outward things die and change, but, *Pf. lxxiii. 26. Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

2. In case of sadness of spirit, when God seems to cast off the soul in desertion, *Cant. v. 6. My beloved had withdrawn himself;* yet God is unchangeable. He is immutable in his love, he may change his countenance, but not

his heart, *Jer. xxxi. 3. I have loved thee with an everlasting love,* Hebrew, *Gnolam*, a love of eternity. If once God's electing love riseth upon the soul, it never sets, *Isa. liv. 10. The mountains shall be removed, but my loving-kindness shall not depart from thee, neither the covenant of my peace be removed.* God's love stands faster than the mountains: God's love to Christ is unchangeable; and he will no more cease loving believers, than he will cease loving Christ.

*Use 4. Of exhortation.* Get an interest in this unchangeable God, then thou art as a rock in the sea, immoveable in midst of all changes.

*Qu. How shall I get a part in this unchangeable God?*

*Ans.* By having a change wrought in thee, *1 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.* When we are changed, a *tenebris ad lucem*, so changed, as if another soul did live in the same body; by this change we are interested in the unchangeable God.

Trust to this God only, who is unchangeable, *Isa. ii. 22. Cease from men; leave trusting to the reed, but trust to the Rock of ages.* He that is by faith ingarrison'd in God, is safe in all changes; he is like a boat that is tied to an immoveable rock. He that trusts in God, trusts in that which cannot fail him, he is unchangeable, *Heb. xiii. 5. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* Health may leave us, riches, friends may leave us; but, saith God, I'll not leave thee; my power shall support thee, my Spirit shall sanctify thee, my mercy shall save thee: I will never leave thee. O trust in this unchangeable God: God is jealous of two things, of our love, and of our trust: He is jealous of our love, lest we love the creature more than him, therefore he makes it prove bitter: and of our trust, lest we should place more confidence in it than him, therefore he makes it prove unfaithful. Outward comforts are given us as baits by the way to refresh us, but not as crutches to lean on; if we make the creature an idol, what we make our trust, God makes our shame. O trust in the immortal God. We, like *Noah's* dove, have no footing for our souls, till we get into the ark of God's unchangeableness, *Pf. cxxv. 1. They that trust in the Lord, shall be like mount Sion, which cannot be removed.*

God is unchangeable in his decree; what he hath decreed from eternity is unalterable, *Isa. xli. 10. My counsel shall stand.* Argument,



That God's eternal counsel or decree is immutable: if God changed his decree, it must be from some defect of wisdom or foresight in God; for that is the reason why men do change their purposes: through a want of foresight, they see something after, which they did not see before: but this cannot be the cause why God should alter his decree, because his knowledge is perfect, he sees all things in one intricate prospect before him.

*Obj.* But is not God said to repent? There seems to be a change in his decree, *Jonah* iii. 10. *The Lord repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them.*

*Ans.* Repentance is attributed to God figuratively and improperly, *Num.* xxiii. 19. *He is not man that he should repent.* There may be a change in God's work, but not in his will: God may will a change, but not change his will. "God may change his sentence, but not his decree." As suppose a king shall cause a sentence to be passed upon a malefactor whom he intends to save, notwithstanding this sentence, the king doth not alter his decree: so God threatened destruction to *Nineveh*, *Jon.* iii. 4. but the people of *Nineveh* repenting, God spared them; here God changed his sentence, but not his decree; it was what had lain in the womb of his purpose from eternity.

*Obj.* But if God's decree be unchangeable, and cannot be revers'd, then to what purpose should we use the means? Our endeavours towards salvation cannot alter his decree.

*Ans.* This decree of God doth not take off my endeavour; for he that hath decreed my salvation, hath decreed it in the use of means; and if I neglect the means, I go about to reprobate myself. No man argues thus: God hath decreed how long I shall live: therefore, I will not use means to preserve my life, not eat and drink. God hath decreed the time of my life in the use of means; so God hath decreed my salvation in the use of word, prayer, sacraments: and as a man that refuseth his food murders himself, so he that refuseth to work out his salvation doth destroy himself. The vessels of mercy are said to be prepared unto glory, *Rom.* ix. 23. How are they prepared, but by being sanctified? and that cannot be but in the use of means: therefore let not God's decree take thee off from holy endeavour. A good saying of Dr. Preston, *Hast thou an heart to pray? it is a sign no decree of wrath has passed against thee.*

*Use* 1. If God's decree be eternal and unchangeable, then God doth not elect our faith foreseen, as the *Arminians*, *Rom.* ix. 11, 14. *The children being not yet born, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.* We are not elected for holiness, but to holiness, *Eph.* i. 4. If we are not justified for our faith, much less elected for our faith; but we are not justified for it: we are said to be justified thro' faith as an instrument, *Eph.* ii. 8. but not for faith as a cause: and, if not justified for faith, then much less elected. God's decree of election is eternal and unchangeable, therefore depends not upon faith foreseen, *Acts* xiii. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* They were not elected because they believed, but they believed because they were elected.

*Use* 2. If God's decree be unchangeable, it is comfort in two cases, 1. Concerning God's providence towards his church. We are ready to quarrel with providence, if every thing doth not jump with our desire: remember God's work goes on, and nothing falls out but what he hath decreed from eternity. 2. God hath decreed troubles for the church's good; the troubling God's church is like the angel's troubling the water, *John* v. 4. which made way for healing his people. He hath decreed troubles in the church; *His fire is in Sion, and his furnace in Jerusalem*, *Isa.* xxxi. 9. The wheels in a watch move cross one to another, but they all carry on the motion of the watch: so the wheels of providence often move cross to our desires, but still they carry on God's unchangeable decree, *Dan.* xii. 10. *Many shall be made white.* God lets the waters of affliction be poured on his people, he doth but lay them a whitening. Therefore murmur not at God's dealings; his work goes on, nothing falls out but what he hath wisely decreed from eternity; every thing shall promote God's design, and fulfil his decree.

2. Comfort to the godly in regard of their salvation, *2 Tim.* ii. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.* God's council of election is unchangeable: once elected, and for ever elected, *Rev.* iii. 5. *I will not blot his name out of the book of life.* The book of God's decree hath no erratas in it, no blottings out: once justified never unjustified, *Hos.* xiii. 14. *Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* God never repents

repents of his electing love, 1 *John* xiii. 1. *He loveth them to the end.* Therefore, if thou art a believer, comfort thy self with this, the immutability of God's decree.

*Use* 3. To conclude, a word to the wicked, who march furiously against God and his people: let them know, God's decree is unchangeable, God will not alter it, nor can they break it; and while they resist God's will they fulfil it. There is a two-fold will of God, *Voluntas præcepti & decreti*; the will of God's precept, and of his decree. While the wicked resist the will of God's precept, they fulfil the will of his permissive decree. *Judas* betrays Christ, *Pilate* condemns him, the soldiers crucify him; while

they resisted the will of God's precept, they fulfilled the will of his permissive decree, *Acts* iv. 28. Such as are wicked, God commands one thing, they do the quite contrary; to keep the sabbath they profane it; while they disobey his command, they fulfil his permissive decree. If a man set up two nets, one of silk, the other of iron, the silken net may be broken, not the iron: God's commands are the silken net; while men break the silken net of God's command, they are taken in the iron net of his decree; while they sit backward to God's precepts, they row forward to his decree; his decree to permit their sin, and to punish them for their sin permitted.

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OF THE WISDOM OF GOD.

**T**HE next attribute is God's wisdom; which is one of the brightest beams of the God-head, *Job* ix. 4. *He is wise in heart.* The heart is the seat of wisdom; *Cor in Hebræo sumitur pro judicio*, Pineda. Among the Hebrews, the heart is put for wisdom, *Job* xxxiv. 34. *Let men of understanding tell me: in the Hebrew let men of heart tell me.* God is wise in heart, that is, he is most wise. 1. God is only wise; he doth solely and wholly possess all wisdom; therefore he is called *the only wise God*, 1 *Tim.* i. 17. All the treasures of wisdom are locked up in him, and no creature can have any wisdom, but as God is pleased to give it out of his treasury. 2. God is perfectly wise; there is no defect in his wisdom. Men may be wise in some things. But in other things may betray imprudence and weakness. But God is the exemplar and pattern of wisdom, and the pattern must be perfect, *Mat.* v. 48. God's wisdom appears in two things, 1<sup>st</sup>. His infinite intelligence. 2<sup>dly</sup>. His exact working.

1. His infinite intelligence. He knows the most profound, obstruse secrets, *Dan.* ii. 28. He knows the thoughts, which are the most intricate subtil things, *Amos* iv. 13. *He declareth to man what is his thought.* Let sin be contrived never so politicly, God will pull off all masks and disguises, and make an heart-anatomy. He knows all future contingencies, & *ante intuitu*, all things are before him in one clear prospect.

2. His exact curious working. He is *wise in heart*; his wisdom lies in his *works*. These works of God are bound up in three great volumes, where we may read his wisdom.

1. The work of *creation*. The creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so a looking-glass in which we may see his *wisdom*. None but a wise God could so curiously contrive the world. Behold the earth decked with variety of flowers, which are both for beauty and fragrancy; the heaven bespangled with lights: we may see the glorious wisdom of God blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. His wisdom is seen in the marshaling and ordering every thing in its proper place and sphere: if the sun had been set lower, it would have burnt us: if higher it would not have warmed us with its beams. God's wisdom is seen in appointing the seasons of the year, *Pf.* lxxiv. 17. *Thou hast made summer and winter.* If it had been all summer, the heat would have scorched us, if all winter, the cold would have killed us. The wisdom of God is seen in *chequering* the dark and the light; if it had been all night, there had been no labour, if all day, there had been no rest. Wisdom is seen in *mixing the elements*, the earth with the sea: if it had been all sea, then we had wanted bread; if it had been all earth, then we had wanted water. The wisdom of God is seen in preparing and ripening the fruits of the earth: the wind and frosts prepare the fruits, the sun and rain ripen the fruits. God's wisdom



dom is seen in setting bounds to the sea, and so wisely contriving it, that though the sea be higher than the earth, yet it should not overflow the earth; so that we may cry out with the *Psalmist*, *Pf. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.* There is nothing to be seen but miracles of wisdom. God's wisdom is seen in ordering things in the body politic, that one shall have need of another: the poor need the rich man's money, and the rich need the poor man's labour. God makes one trade depend upon another, that one may be helpful to another, and that mutual love may be preserved.

(2.) The second work wherein God's wisdom shines forth, is the work of redemption. 1. Here was the master-piece of divine wisdom, to contrive a way to happiness, between the sin of man, and the justice of God. We may cry out with the apostle, *Rom. xi. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* This posed men and angels. If God had put us to find out a way of salvation when we were lost, we could never have had an head to devise, nor a heart to desire what God's infinite wisdom had found out for us. Mercy had a mind to save sinners, yet loth that the justice of God should be wronged: It is pity, faith mercy, that such a noble creature as man should be made to be undone; and yet no reason that God's justice should be a loser. What way then shall be found out? Angels cannot satisfy for the wrong done to God's justice, nor is it fit that one nature should sin, and another nature suffer: what then? Shall man be for ever lost? Now while mercy was thus debating with itself what to do for the recovery of fallen man, here the wisdom of God stepped in; and thus the oracle spake, Let God become man; let the second person in the trinity be incarnate, and suffer; and so for fitness he shall be man, and for ability he shall be God: thus justice may be satisfied, and man saved. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God, thus to make justice and mercy to kiss each other! great is this mystery, *God manifested in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. What wisdom was this, that Christ should be made sin, yet know no sin; that God should condemn the sin; yet save the sinner? Here was wisdom, to find out the way of salvation. 2. The means by which salvation is applied set forth God's wisdom, that salvation should be by faith, not by works: faith is an humble grace, it gives all to Christ; it is an adorer of

free grace: and free grace being advanced here, God hath his glory: and it is his highest wisdom to exalt his own glory. 3. The way of working faith declares God's wisdom; it is wrought by the word preached, *Rom. x. 17. Faith comes by hearing.* What is the weak breath of a man to convert a soul? It is like whispering in the ears of a dead man; this is *foolishness* in the eye of the world: but the Lord loves to shew his wisdom, by that which seems folly. 1 Cor. i. 17. *He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* Why so; ver. xxix. *That no flesh should glory in his presence.* Should God convert by the ministry of angels, then we should have been ready to have gloried in angels, and have given that honour to them which is due to God: but when God works by weak tools, makes use of men who are of like passions with ourselves, and by them converts; now the power is plainly seen to be of God. 2 Cor. iv. 7. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* Herein is God's wisdom seen that no flesh may glory in his presence.

(3.) The wisdom of God wonderfully appears in the works of his providence. Every providence hath either a mercy or a wonder wrapt up in it. The wisdom of God, in his works of providence, appears, 1. By effecting great things by small, contemptible means. He cured the stung *Israelites*, by a brazen serpent. If some sovereign antidote had been used, if the balm of *Gilead* had been brought, there had been some likelihood that this should have healed: but what was there in a brazen serpent! It was a mere image, and not applied to him that was wounded, only he was to look upon it, yet this wrought a cure. The less probability in the instrument, the more is God's wisdom seen. 2. The wisdom of God is seen in doing his work by that which to the eye of flesh seems quite contrary: God intended to advance *Joseph*, and make all his brethren's sheaves bow to his sheaf: now what way doth he take? first, *Joseph* is thrown into the pit, then sold into *Egypt*; then after that put in prison, *Gen. xxxix. 20.* And by his imprisonment, God made way for his advancement. For God to save in an ordinary way, wisdom would not be so much taken notice of. But then he goes strangely to work, and saves in that very way in which we think he will destroy; now his wisdom shines forth in a most glorious conspicuous manner.

God

God would make *Israel* victorious, and what way doth he go in? He lessens *Gideon's* army, *Judg.* vii. 2. *The people that are with thee are too many: he reduceth the army of two and thirty thousand to three hundred; and by taking away the means of victory, makes Israel victorious.* God had a design to bring his people out of *Egypt*, and a strange course he takes to effect it: he stirred up the hearts of the *Egyptians* to hate them, *Pf.* cv. 25. *He turned their heart to hate his people.* And the more they hated and oppressed *Israel*, the more God plagued the *Egyptians*, and the gladder they were to let *Israel* go, *Exod.* xii. 33. The *Egyptians* were urgent upon *Israel*, that they might send them out of the land in haste. God had a mind to save *Jonah* when he was cast into the sea, and he lets the fish swallow him up, and so bring him to the shore. God would save *Paul*, and all that were in the ship with him; and there was no way to save them but the ship must break, and they all came safe to land upon the broken pieces of the ship, *Acts* xxvii. 43. In reference to the church, God oft goes by contrary means, makes the enemy do his work; he can strike a straight stroke by crooked sticks. God hath oft made his church grow and flourish by persecution. The showers of blood have made her more fruitful, *Julian.* *Exod.* i. 10. *Come let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply;* and that way they took to suppress them, made them multiply, *v.* 12. The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied: like ground, the more it is harrowed it bears the better crop. The apostles were scattered by reason of persecution, and their scattering was like the scattering of seed; they went up and down and preached the gospel, and brought daily converts. *Paul* was put in prison, and his bonds were a means to enlarge the gospel, *Phil.* i. 12.

3. The wisdom of God is seen in making the most desperate evils turn to the good of his children. As several poisonful ingredients, wisely tempered by the skill of the artist, make a sovereign medicine; so God makes the most deadly afflictions co-operate for the good of his children. He purifies them, and prepares them for heaven, *2 Cor.* iv. 17. These hard frosts hasten the spring flowers of glory. The wise God, by a divine chymistry, turns afflictions into cordials. God makes his people gainers by losses, and turns their crosses into blessings.

4. The wisdom of God is seen in this, that

the sins of men shall carry on God's work; yet that he should have no hand in their sin. The Lord permits sin, but doth not approve it. He hath an hand in the action in which sin is, but not in the sin of the action. As in the crucifying of Christ, so far as it was a natural action, God did concur; if he had not given the *Jews* life and breath, they could not have done it: but as it was a sinful action, so God abhorred it. A musician plays upon a viol out of tune; the musician is the cause of the sound, but the jarring and discord is from the viol itself: so men's natural motion is from God, but their sinful motion is from themselves. A man that rides on a lame horse, his riding is the cause why the horse goes; but the lameness is from the horse itself. Herein is God's wisdom, the sins of men shall carry on his work, yet he hath no hand in them.

5. The wisdom of God is seen in helping in desperate cases. God loves to shew his wisdom when human help and wisdom fail. Exquisite lawyers love to wrestle with niceties and difficulties in the law, to shew their skill the more. God's wisdom is never at a loss; but when providences are darkest, now appears the morning-star of deliverance, *Pf.* cxxxvi. 23. *Who remembered us in our low condition.* Sometimes God melts away the spirits of his enemies, *Josh.* ii. 24. Sometimes he finds them other work to do, and sounds a retreat to them, as he did to *Saul* when he was pursuing *David*; *The Philistines are in the land. In the mount will God be seen.* When the church seems to be upon the altar, her place and liberty ready to be sacrificed, now comes the angel.

6. God's wisdom is seen in befooling wise men, and making their wisdom a means of their overthrow. *Ahithophel* had deep policy, *2 Sam.* xvi. 23. *The counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: but he consulted his own shame, The Lord turned his counsel into foolishness,* *2 Sam.* xvii. 23. *Job* v. 13. *God taketh the wise in their own craftiness;* that is, when they think to deal wisely, he not only disappoints them, but insnares them. The snares they lay for others catch themselves, *Pf.* ix. 16. *In the net which they hid, is their own foot taken.* God loves to counterplot politicians; he makes use of their own wit to undo them, and hangs *Haman* upon his own gallows.

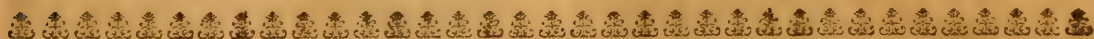
Use 1. Adore the wisdom of God; it is an infinite deep the angels cannot search into, *Rom.*



*Rom. xi. 33. His ways are past finding out.* And as we should adore, so we should rest in the wisdom of God: God sees what condition is best for us. Did we believe the wisdom of God, it would keep us from murmuring. Rest in God's wisdom in several cases: 1. In want of spiritual comfort: God is wise, he sees it good sometimes we should be without comfort. Perhaps we should be lifted up with spiritual enlargements, as *Paul* with his revelations, *2 Cor. xii. 7.* It is hard to have the heart low, when comfort is high. God sees humility is better for us than joy. It is better to want comfort and be humble, than to have it and be proud. 2. In want of bodily strength, rest in God's wisdom; he sees what is best. Perhaps the less health the more grace; weaker in body the stronger we are in faith, *2 Cor. iv. 16. Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* At Rome there were two laurel trees; when the one withered the other flourished. The inward man is renewed. When God shakes the tree of the body, he is now gathering the fruits of righteousness, *Heb. xii. 11.* Sickness is God's lance to let out the imposthume of sin, *Is. xxvii. 9.* 3. In case of God's providences to his church: we wonder what God is doing with us, and are ready to kill ourselves with care: rest in God's wisdom, he knows best what he hath to do, *Psa. lxxvii. 19. His Footsteps are not known.* Trust him where you cannot trace him. God is most in his way, when we think he is most out of the way: when we think God's church is as it were in the grave, and there is a tombstone laid upon her, God's wisdom can roll away the stone from the sepulchre. *Christ cometh leaping over mountains,* Cant. ii. 8. Either his

power can remove the mountain, or his wisdom knows how to leap over it. 4. In case we are low in the world, or have but little oil in our cruse; rest in God's wisdom, he sees it best; it is to cure pride and wantonness. God knew if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost. God, he saw riches would be a snare unto thee, *1 Tim. vi. 9.* Art thou troubled that God hath prevented a snare? God will make thee rich in faith; what thou lackest in temporals shall be made up in spirituals: God will give thee more of his love. Thou art weak in estate, yet God will make thee strong in assurance. O rest in God's wisdom! he will carve the best piece for thee. 5. In case of the loss of dear friends, a wife, or child, or husband; rest satisfied in God's wisdom. God hath taken away these, because he would have more of your love; he breaks these crutches, that we may live more upon him by faith. God would have us learn to go without crutches.

*Use 2.* If God be infinitely wise, then let us go to him for wisdom; as *Solomon,* *1 Kings iii. 9. Give thy servant an understanding heart; and the speech pleased the Lord;* And there is encouragement for us, *If any one lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not,* James i. 5. Wisdom is in God, *tantum in fonte,* as in the fountain; his wisdom is imparted, not impaired; his stock is not spent by giving. Go then to God; Lord, do thou light my lamp; in thy light shall I see light; give me wisdom, to know the fallacy of my heart, the subtilties of the old serpent; to walk jealously towards myself, religiously towards thee, prudently towards others: guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.



## OF GOD'S POWER.

THE next attribute is God's power, *Job ix. 10. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong,* In this chapter is a magnificent description of God's power; *Lo, he is strong.* The Hebrew word for strong, signifies a conquering, prevailing strength. *He is strong;* the superlative degree is intended here, viz. He is most strong. He is called, *El-shaddai,* God almighty, *Gen. xvii. 1.* His almightiness lies in this, he can do

whatever is feasible. Divines distinguish between authority and power. God hath both.

(1.) He hath a sovereign right and authority over man. He can do with his creature as he please. Who shall dispute with God? who shall ask him a reason of his doings? *Dan. iv. 35. He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest*

*dost thou?* God sits judge in the highest court, he calls the monarchs of the earth to the bar, and is not bound to give a reason of his proceedings; *Pf. lxxv. 5, 7. He putteth down one, and raiseth up another.* He hath salvation and damnation in his power. He hath the key of justice in his hand, to lock up whom he will in the fiery prison of hell; and he hath the key of mercy in his hands to open heaven's gate to whom he please. This is the name engraven upon his vesture, *King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 16.* He sits Lord paramount, and who can call him to an account? *Isa. xli. 10. I will do all my pleasure.* The world is God's diocese, and shall not he do what he will in his own diocese? He it was that turned king *Nebuchadnezzar* to eat grass, and threw the angels to hell when they sinned; that broke the head of the *Babylonish* empire, *Isa. xiv. 12. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! Thy pomp is brought down to the grave. Who sets bounds to the sea, and bridles the proud waves, Job xxxviii. 11.* God is the *Supreme Monarch*, all power is seated originally in him; And the powers that be are of God, *Rom. xiii. 1.* Kings hold their crowns of him, *Prov. viii. 15. By me kings reign.*

(2.) As God hath authority, so he hath infinite power. What is authority without power? *He is mighty in strength, Job ix. 4.* This power of God is seen,

1. In the creation. To create, requires an infinite power; all the world cannot make a flie. God's power in creating is evident, 1. Because he needs no instruments to work with; it is proper to God to work without tools. 2. He needs no matter to work upon: first he creates matter, and then works upon it. 3. He works without labour, *Pf. xxxiii. 9. He spake, and it was done.*

2. The power of God is seen in the conversion of souls. Surely a mighty power went to raise Christ from the grave, *Eph. i. 10.* (1.) The same power goes to draw a sinner to God, as drew Christ out of the grave to heaven. Greater power is put forth in conversion, than in creation. 1. When God made the world, he met with no opposition; as he had nothing to help him, so he had nothing to hinder him: but when he comes to convert a sinner, here he meets with opposition; satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him: a sinner is angry with converting grace. (2.) The world was the *Work of God's fingers, Pf. viii. 3.* Conversion is

the *Work of God's arm, Luke i. 5, 3.* In the creation, God wrought but one miracle, he *spake the word*; but in conversion, he works many miracles: the blind is made to see, the dead is raised, the deaf hears the voice of the Son of God. O the infinite power of Jehovah! Before his sceptre, angels vail and prostrate themselves; kings cast their crowns at his feet. *Amos ix. 5. He toucheth the mountains, and they melt. Job ix. 6. He removeth the earth out of her place.* An earthquake makes the earth tremble upon her pillars, but God shakes it out of its place; he can remove the earth from its centre. *God can do what he will, his power is as large as his will.* Were men's power as large as their will, what work would they make in the world! God's power is of equal extent with his will. God can with a word unpin the wheels, and break the axle-tree of the creation: He can do *more than we can think, Eph. iii. 20.* He can suspend natural agents: he sealed up the lion's mouth, made the fire not to burn: he made the waters to stand upon an heap: he caused the sun to go ten degrees backward in *Abaz* his dial, *Isa. iii. 8.* What can pose omnipotency? *The Lord cuts off the spirit of princes, Pf. lxxvi. 12.* He counter-works his enemies; he pulls down their flags and banners of pride, insatuates their counsels, breaks their forces; and he doth it with ease, *with the turning of his hand, Psal. lxxxi. 14. with his breath. Isa. xl. 24. with a look.* That is all it needs cost God to destroy his enemies; a look, a cast of his eye, *Exod. xiv. 24. The Lord looked into the host of the Egyptians, thro' the pillar of fire, and troubled their host.* Who shall stop him in his march? God commands, and all creatures in heaven and earth obey him. *Xerxes the Persian monarch, threw fetters into the sea, when its waves swelled, as if he would have chained up the waters; but when God speaks, the wind and sea obey him; if he say but the word, the stars fight in their course against Sifera; if he stamp with his foot, an army of angels shall presently be in a battalia.* What cannot omnipotent power do? *The Lord is a man of war, Exod. xv. iii. He hath a mighty arm, Pf. lxxxix. 13.* God's power is a *glorious power, Col. i. 11.* 1. It is an irresistible power, *Rom. ix. 19. Who hath resisted his will?* To contest with him, is as if the thorns should set themselves in battle array against the fire; or as if an infirm child should fight with an arch-angel.



gel. If the sinner be once taken in God's iron net, there is no escaping, *Isa. xliii. 13. There is none that can deliver out of my hand.* 2 God's power is an inexhaustible power, it is never spent or wasted. Men, while they exercise their strength, weaken it; but God hath an everlasting spring of strength in him, *Isa. xxvi. 4. Tho' he spends his arrows upon his enemies, Deut. xxxii. 23. yet he doth not spend his strength, Isa. xl. 28. He fainteth not, neither is weary.*

Obj. *Can God do all things? he cannot deny himself.*

Ans. Tho' God can do all things, he cannot do that which stains the glory of his Godhead: he cannot sin; he cannot do that which implies a contradiction. To be a God of truth, and yet deny himself, is a contradiction.

Use 1. If God be so infinite in power, *Fear this great God.* We are apt to fear such as are in power; *Jer. v. 32. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: Will ye not tremble at my presence?* He hath power to cast our souls and bodies into hell, *Pf. xc. 11. Who knows the power of his wrath? God can with the same breath that made us, dissolve us; His eyes are as a flame of fire; the rocks are thrown down by him, Nah. i. 6. Solomon saith, Where the word of a king is, there is power, Eccl. viii. 4. much more where the word of God is.* O let us fear this mighty God! The fear of God will drive out all other base fear.

Use 2. See the deplorable condition of wicked men: 1. This power of God is not for them: 2. It is against them.

1. This power of God is not for them: they have no union with God, therefore have no warrant to lay claim to his power. His power is no relief to them. He hath power to forgive sins, but he will not put forth his power towards an impenitent sinner. God's power is an eagle's wing, to carry the saints to heaven: but what privilege is that to the wicked; tho' a man will carry his child in his arms over a dangerous water, yet he will not carry an enemy in his arms. God's power is not engaged to help those that fight against him. Let miseries come upon the wicked, they have none to help them; they are like a ship in a storm without a pilot, driven upon the rocks.

2. This power of God is against the wicked. God's power will not be the sinner's shield to defend him, but a sword to wound him. God's power will bind the sinner in chains. God's power serves to revenge the wrong done to his

mercy. God will be almighty to damn the sinner. Now in what a condition is every unbeliever; God's power is engaged against him, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, *Heb. x. 31.*

Use 3. It reproves such as do not believe this power of God. We say, we do not doubt of God's power, but his will. But indeed it is God's power that we question. *Is any thing too hard for God? Jer. xxxii. 27. yet we stagger thro' unbelief, as if the arm of God's power were shrunk, and he could not help in desperate cases. Take away a king's power, and we unking him; take away the Lord's power, and we un-God him: yet how guilty of this are we! Did not Israel question God's power! Can he prepare a table in the wilderness? Pf. lxxviii. 19. they thought the wilderness was a fitter place for making of graves, than spreading of a table. Did not Martha doubt of Christ's power? John xi. 39. He hath been dead four days. If Christ had been there while Lazarus was sick, or when he had been newly dead, Martha did not question but Christ could have raised him; but he had lain in the grave four days, and now she seemed to question his power. Christ had as much ado to raise her faith, as to raise her dead brother. And Moses, tho' an holy man, yet limits God's power thro' unbelief, Num. xi. 21. The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh for a whole month: shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered for them to suffice them? And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? This is a great affront to God, to go to deny his power. That men doubt of God's power, appears, 1. By their taking indirect courses. Would they defraud in their dealings, use false weights, if they believed the power of God, that he could provide for them? 2. By their depending more upon second causes than upon God, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. In his disease, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physician.*

Use 4. If God be infinite in power, then let us take heed of hardning our hearts against God, *Job ix. 4. Who hath hardned himself against him, and prospered? Job sends a challenge to all creatures in heaven and earth, Who is he did ever take up the bucklers against God, and came off conqueror? For a person to go on daringly in any sin, is to harden his heart*

heart against God, and as it were to raise a war against heaven; and let him remember God is *Elshaddai*, almighty; he will be too hard for them that oppose him, *Job* xl. 9. *Hast thou an arm like God?* Such as will not bow to his golden sceptre, shall be broken with his iron rod. *Julian* hardened his heart against God, he opposed him to his face; but what got he at last? did he prosper? Being wounded in battle, he threw up his blood into the air, and said to Christ, *Vicisti, Galilæe*, "O Galilean, thou hast overcome;" I acknowledge thy power, whose name and truth I have opposed. Will folly contend with wisdom? Weakness with power? Finite with infinite? O take heed of hardning your heart against God! he can send legions of angels to avenge his quarrel. It is better to meet God with tears in your eyes, than weapons in your hand. You may overcome God sooner by repentance, than by resistance.

*Use 5.* Get an interest in God, and then this glorious power is engaged for you. God gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for the good of his people, *1 Chr.* xvii. 24. *The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.* This almightiness of God's power is a wonderful support and comfort to every believer. It was *Samson's* riddle, *Judges* xiv. 14. *Out of the strong came forth sweetness:* So out of the attribute of God's power, out of this strong comes forth sweetness. It is comfort in several cases,

1. In case of strong corruption. My sins, saith a child of God, are potent; I have no power against this army that comes against me: I pray, and humble my soul by fasting, but my sins return upon me. Ay, but dost thou believe the power of God? The strong God can conquer thy strong corruption; tho' sin be too hard for thee, yet not for him; he can soften hard hearts, quicken the dead. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* *Gen.* xviii. 14. Set God's power on work. By faith and prayer, say, Lord! it is not for thy honour that the devil should have so strong a party within me; O break the head of this Leviathan; Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee.

2. In case of strong temptation. Satan is called the strong man: O but remember the power of God; Christ is called, *The lion of the tribe of Judah*, he hath broken the serpent's head upon the cross. Satan is a chained enemy, and a conquered enemy: *Michael* is strong-

er than the dragon.

3. Comfort in case of weakness of grace, and fear of falling away. I pray, but I cannot send out strong cries; I believe, but the hand of my faith doth shake and tremble. Cannot God strengthen weak grace? *2 Cor.* xii. 9. *My strength is made perfect in weakness: most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* I fear I shall not hold out. Christian, dost thou believe the power of God? Hath not God preserved thy grace thus far? May'st thou not set up thy *Ebenezer*? God hath kept thy grace hitherto as a spark in the main ocean. And is not he able still to keep thy grace? *1 Pet.* i. 5. *We are kept by the power of God, &c.* God's mercy pardons us, but his power preserves us. He who by his power keeps the stars that they do not fall out of their orb, keeps our grace that it doth not fail or annihilate.

4. Comfort in case of the deficiency in thy estate. God can multiply the oil in the cruse; miraculously he can raise up supplies: God, who provides for the birds of the air, cannot he provide for his children? He that clothes the lilies, cannot he clothe his lambs?

5. Comfort in regard of the resurrection. This seems difficult to believe, that the bodies of men, when eaten up by worms, devoured by beasts and fishes, or consumed to ashes, should be raised the same numerical bodies; but if we believe the power of God, it is no great wonder; which is hardest, to create, or raise the dead: he that can make a body of nothing, can restore it to its parts, when mingled and confounded with other substances, *Mat.* xix. 26. *With God all things are possible.* If we believe the first article of the creed, That God is almighty, we may quickly believe the other article, The resurrection of the body. God can raise the dead because of his power, and he cannot but raise them, because of his truth.

6. It is comfort in reference to the church of God: he can save and deliver it when it is brought low. The enemies have power in their hand, but the remainder of wrath God will restrain, *Pf.* lxxvi. 10. God can either confine the enemies power or confound it: *If God be for us, who can be against us?* God can create *Jerusalem* a praise, *Isa.* lxi. 18. The church in *Ezekiel*, is compared to dry bones, but God made breath to enter into them, and they lived, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 10. The ship of the church may



be tossed, because sin is in it, but it shall not be overwhelmed, because Christ is in it, *Pf.*

*xlvi. 5. Deus in medio.* All the church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance.



## OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

**T**HE next attribute is God's Holiness, *Exod. xv. 11. Glorious in holiness.* Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of his crown; it is the name by which God is known, *Pf. cxi. 9. Holy and reverend is his name. He is the holy One,* *Job vi. 10. Seraphims cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory,* *Isa. vi. 3.* His power makes him mighty, his holiness makes him glorious: God's holiness consists in his perfect loving of righteousness, and abhorrency of evil, *Hab. i. 13. Of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.*

*1st,* God is holy intrinsically: 1. He is holy in his nature; his very being is made up of holiness, as light is of the essence of the sun. 2. He is holy in his word; the word bears a stamp of his holiness upon it, as the wax bears an impression of the seal, *Pf. cxix. 140. Thy word is very pure;* it is compared to silver refined seven times, *Pf. xii. 6.* Every line in the word breathes sanctity, it encourageth nothing but holiness. 3. God is holy in his operations, all God doth is holy: he cannot act but like himself; he can no more do an unrighteous action, than the sun can darken, *Pf. cxlv. 17. The Lord is holy in all his works.*

*2ly,* God is holy primarily: he is the original and pattern of holiness; holiness began at him who is the Ancient of days.

*3ly,* God is holy efficiently: he is the cause of all that holiness in others, *James i. 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above.* He made the angels holy; he infused all that holiness into Christ's human nature: all the holiness we have is but one crystal stream from this fountain. We borrow all our holiness from God; as the lights of the sanctuary were lighted from the middle lamp, so all the holiness of others is a lamp lighted from heaven, *Lev. xx. 8. I am the Lord which sanctify you.* God is not only a pattern of holiness, but he is a principle of holiness: his spring feeds all our cisterns, he drops his holy oil of grace upon us.

*4ly,* God is holy transcendently, *1 Sam. ii. 2. There is none holy as the Lord:* no angel in heaven can take the just dimensions of God's holiness. The highest seraphim is too low of stature, to measure these pyramids: the holiness in God is far above the holiness in saints or angels.

1. It is above the holiness in saints, 1. It is a pure holiness: the saints holiness is like gold in the ore, imperfect; their humility is stained with pride; he that hath most faith had need pray, *Lord help my unbelief.* But the holiness of God is pure, like wine from the grape; it hath not the least dash or tincture of impurity mixed with it. 2. A more unchangeable holiness: the saints, tho' they cannot lose the habit of holiness (for the seed of God remains) yet they may lose some degrees of their holiness, *Rev. ii. 4. Thou hast left thy first love.* Grace cannot die, yet the flame of it may go out: holiness in the saints is subject to ebbing, but holiness in God is unchangeable; he never lost a drop of his holiness: as he cannot have more holiness, because he is perfectly holy; so he cannot have less holiness, because he is unchangeably holy.

2. The holiness in God is above the holiness in the angels; holiness in the angels is only a quality, which may be lost, as we see in the fallen angels; but holiness in God is his essence, he is all over holy, and he can as well lose his Godhead as his holiness.

*Obj.* But, is not he privy to all the sins of men? He beholds their impurities; how can this be, and he not be defiled?

*Ans.* God sees all the sins of men, but is no more defiled with them, than the sun is defiled with the vapours that arise out of the earth: God sees sin, not as a patron to approve it, but as a judge to punish it.

*Use 1.* Is God so infinitely holy? Then see how unlike to God sin is: Sin is an unclean thing, it is hyperbolically evil, *Rom. i. 13.* It is called an abomination, *Deut. vii. 25.* God hath no mixture of evil in him: sin hath no mixture

mixture of good; it is the spirits and quintessence of evil; it turns good into evil; it hath deflower'd the virgin-soul, made it red with guilt, and black with filth: it is called the accursed thing, *Josh. vii. 11.* No wonder, therefore, that God doth so hate sin, being so unlike to him, nay, so contrary to him: it strikes at his holiness; sin doth all it can to spight God; sin would not only un-throne God, but un-god him; if sin could help it, God should be God no longer.

*Use 2.* Is God the Holy One, and is his holiness his glory? Then how impious are they, (1.) That are haters of holiness? As the vulture hates perfumes, so they hate this sweet perfume of holiness in the saints; their hearts rise against holiness; as a man's stomach at a dish he hath an antipathy against. There is not a greater sign of a person devoted to hell, than to hate one for that thing wherein he is most like God, his holiness. (2.) That are despisers of holiness; they despise the glory of the Godhead, *Glorious in holiness.* The despising of holiness is seen in the deriding of it; is it not sad, men should deride that which should save them? Sure that patient will die that derides the physic. The deriding the grace of the spirit comes near to the despighting the spirit of grace. Scoffing *Ismael* was cast out of *Abraham's* house, *Gen. xxi. 9.* Such as scoff at holiness, shall be cast out of heaven.

*Use 2. Of exhortation:* Is God so infinitely holy, then let us endeavour to imitate God in holiness, *1 Pet. i. 16. Be ye holy, for I am holy.* There's a twofold holiness, an holiness of equality, and an holiness of similitude: an holiness of equality no man or angel can reach to; who can be equally holy with God? Who can parallel him in sanctity? But, 2. There is an holiness of similitude, and that we must aspire after, to have some analogy and resemblance of God's holiness in us; be as like him in holiness as we can: tho' a taper doth not give so much light as the sun, yet it doth resemble it. We must imitate God in holiness.

*Qu. Must we be like God in holiness, wherein doth our holiness consist?*

*Ans.* In two things, 1<sup>st</sup>, In our suitableness to God's nature. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Our subjection to his will.

1. Our holiness stands in our suitableness to the nature of God: hence the saints are said to partake of the divine nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* which is not a partaking of his essence, but his image.

Herein is the saints holiness, when they are the lively pictures of God: they bear the image of God's meekness, mercifulness, heavenliness; they are of the same judgment with God, of the same disposition; they love what he loves, and hates what he hates.

2. Our holiness consists in our subjection to the will of God: as God's nature is the pattern of holiness, so his will is the rule of holiness. This is our holiness, (1.) When we do his will, *Acts xiii. 22.* (2.) When we bear his will, *Mic. vii. 9.* what he inflicts wisely, we suffer willingly. This is our holiness, when we are suitable to God's nature, and submissive to his will; this should be our great care, to be like God in holiness: our holiness should be so qualified as God's; God's is a real holiness, such should ours be, *Eph. iv. 24. Righteousness and true holiness:* It should not be only the paint of holiness, but the life of holiness; it should not only be like the *Egyptian* temples, beautified without, but like *Solomon's* temple, gold within, *Psa. xlv. 13. The king's daughter is glorious within.* That I may press you to resemble God in holiness.

1. How illustrious every holy person is; he is a fair glass in which some of the beams of God's holiness shine forth. We read, *Aaron* put on garments for glory and beauty, *Exod. xxviii. 2.* When we wear the embroidered garment of holiness, it is for glory and beauty. A good Christian is ruddy, being sprinkled with Christ's blood; and white, being adorned with holiness. As the diamond to a ring, so is holiness to the soul. So beautiful a thing is holiness, that, as *Chrysostron* saith, they that oppose it, cannot but admire it.

2. It is the great design God carries on in the world, to make a people like himself in holiness: what are all the showers of the ordinances for, but to rain down righteousness upon us, and make us holy? What are the promises for, but to encourage holiness? What is the sending of the spirit into the world for, but to anoint us with the holy unction? *1 John ii. 20.* What are all afflictions for, but to make us partakers of God's holiness? *Heb. xii. 10.* What are mercies for; but loadstones to draw us to holiness? What is the end of Christ's dying, but that his blood might wash away our unholiness? *Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, to purify unto himself a peculiar people.* So that if we are not holy, we cross God's great design in the world.



3. It is our holiness draws God's heart to us. Holiness is God's image: God cannot choose but love his image where he sees it. A king loves to see his effigies upon a piece of coin: *Pf. xlv. Thou lovest righteousness.* And where doth righteousness grow, but in an holy heart? *Isa. lxii. 4. Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee:* It was her holiness drew God's love to her, *v. 12. They shall call them the holy people.* God values not any by their high birth, but their holiness.

4. Holiness is the only thing that differenceth us from the reprobate part of the world: God's people have his seal upon them, *2 Tim. ii. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let all that name the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.* The people of God are sealed with a double seal, 1. Election, *The Lord knows who are his.* 2. Sanctification, *Let every one depart from iniquity.* As a nobleman is distinguished from another by his silver star; as a virtuous woman is distinguished from an harlot by her chastity; so holiness distinguisheth between the two seeds: all that are of God, as they have Christ for their captain, *Heb. ii. 10.* so holiness is the white colour they wear.

5. Holiness is our honour. Holiness and honour put together, *1 Theff. iv. 4. Dignity goes along with sanctification, Rev. i. 6. He hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings unto God.* When we are washed and made holy, then we are kings and priests to God. The saints are called vessels of honour; they are called jewels, for the sparkling of their holiness, because filled with wine of the spirit; this makes them earthly angels.

6. Holiness gives us boldness with God, *Jer. xxiii. 26. Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.* Lifting up of the face is an emblem of boldness. Nothing can make us so ashamed to go to God, as sin: a wicked man in prayer may lift up his hands, but he cannot lift up his face. When Adam had lost his holiness, he lost his confidence: he hid himself. But

the holy person goes to God, as a child to his father; his conscience doth not upbraid him with allowing any sin, therefore he can go boldly to the throne of grace, and have mercy to help in time of need, *Heb. iv. 16.*

7. Holiness gives peace: sin raiseth a storm in the conscience; *Ubi peccatum ibi procella. Isa. lvii. 21. There is no peace to the wicked.* Righteousness and peace are put together. Holiness is the root which bears this sweet fruit of peace: righteousness and peace kiss each other.

8. Holiness leads to heaven: holiness is the king of heaven's high way, *Isa. xxxv. 8. A high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness.* At Rome there was the temple of virtue and honour, and they were to go through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour: so we must go through the temple of holiness to the temple of heaven. Glory begins in virtue, *2 Pet. i. 3. Who hath called us to glory and virtue?* happiness is nothing else but the quintessence of holiness; holiness is glory militant, and happiness holiness triumphant.

Q. *What shall we do to resemble God in holiness?*  
Ans. Have recourse to Christ's blood by faith; it is *lavacrum animæ*, legal purifications: were types and emblems of it, *1 John i. 7.* The word is a glass to shew us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away.

2. Pray for an holy heart, *Pf. li. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God.* Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, Lord, my heart is full of leprosy; it defiles all it toucheth: Lord, I am not fit to live with such an heart, for I cannot honour thee; nor die with such an heart, for I cannot see thee. O create in me a clean heart; send thy spirit into me, to refine and purify me, that I may be a temple fit for thee the holy God to inhabit:

3. Walk with them that are holy, *Prov. xiii. 20. He that walketh with the wise shall be wise.* Be among the spices and you'll smell of them. Association begets assimilation: nothing hath a greater power and energy to effect holiness, than the communion of saints.

## OF GOD'S JUSTICE.

THE next attribute is God's justice: all God's attributes are identical, and are the

same with his essence. Though he hath several attributes whereby he is made known to us, yet

yet he hath but one essence. A cedar tree may have several branches, yet it is but one cedar. So there are several attributes of God whereby we conceive of him, but one entire essence. Well then, concerning God's justice, *Deut. xxxii.*

4. *Just and right is he.* Job xxxvii. 23. *Touching the Almighty; we cannot find him out: he is excellent in plenty of justice.* God is said to dwell in justice, *Pf. lxxxix. 14.* *Justice and Judgment are the habitation of thy throne.* In God power and justice meet. Power holds the sceptre, and justice holds the balance.

Qu. *What is God's Justice?*

Ans. "Justice is to give every one his due." God's justice is the rectitude of his nature, whereby he is carried to the doing of that which is righteous and equal; *Prov. xxiv. 12.* *Shall not he render to every man according to his works?* God is an impartial judge; he judgeth the cause: men oft judge the person, but not the cause; which is not justice, but malice: God judgeth the cause, *Gen. xviii. 21.* *I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry which is come up unto me.* When the Lord is upon a punitive act, he weighs things in the balance, he doth not punish rashly; he doth not go in the way of a riot, but a circuit, against offenders. Concerning God's justice, I shall lay down these six positions.

1. God cannot but be just. His holiness is the cause of his justice. Holiness will not suffer him to do any thing but what is righteous. He can no more be unjust, than he can be unholy.

2. God's will is the supreme rule of justice; It is the standard of equity. His will is wise and good. God wills nothing but what is just; and therefore it is just, because he wills it.

3. God doth justice *voluntarily*: justice flows from his nature. Men may act unjustly, because they are bribed or forced: God will not be bribed, because of his justice; he cannot be forced, because of his power. He doth justice out of love to justice, *Heb. i. 9.* *Thou lovest righteousness.*

4. Justice is the perfection of the divine nature. *Aristotle* saith, *justice comprehends in it all virtues.* To say God is just, is to say, he is all that is excellent: perfections meet in him, as lines in a centre. He is not only just, but justice itself.

5. God never did, nor can do the least wrong to his creature. God's justice hath been wronged but never did any wrong. God doth not go according to the *summum jus*, or rigour of the

law; he abates something of his severity. He might inflict heavier penalties than he doth, *Ezra ix. 13.* *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve; our mercies are more than we deserve, our punishments less.*

6. God's justice is such, that it is not fit for any man or angel to expostulate with God, or demand a reason of his actions. God hath not only authority on his side, but equity: *He lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,* *Isa. xxviii. 17.* and it is below him to give an account to us of his proceedings. Which of these two is fittest to take place, God's justice or man's reason? *Rom. ix. 20.* *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* The plumb line of our reason is too short to fathom the depth of God's justice, *Rom. xi. 33.* *How unsearchable are his judgments!* We are to adore God's justice, where we cannot see a reason of it.

Now God's justice runs in two channels: It is seen in two things, the distribution of rewards and punishments.

1. In rewarding the virtuous; *Pf. lviii. 11.* *verily there is a reward for the righteous.* The saints shall not serve him for nought, he will reward *præces & lachrymas*; though they may be losers for him, they shall not be losers by him, *Heb. vi. 10.* *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed to his name.* He gives a reward, not that we deserved it, but because he hath promised it.

2. He is just in punishing offenders. And he is just, 1. Because he punisheth sinners by a law. *Where there is no law, there is no transgression,* *Rom. iv. 15.* But God hath given men a law, and they break it, therefore he punisheth them justly. 2. God is just in punishing the wicked; because he never punished them, but upon full proof and evidence. What greater evidence than for a man's own conscience to be witness against him? There is nothing God chargeth upon a sinner, but conscience doth set seal to the truth of it.

Use 1. See here another flower of God's crown, he is just and righteous. He is the exemplar and pattern of justice.

Obj. But how doth it seem to stand with God's justice, that the wicked should prosper in the world? *Jer. xii. 1.* *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* This hath been a great stumbling, and been ready to make many question God's justice. Such as are highest in sin, are



are highest in power. *Diogenes* seeing *Harpalus* a thief go on prosperously, said, *Sure God hath cast off the government of the world, and minded not how things went here below.*

*Ans.* 1. The wicked may be sometimes instruments to do God's works; though they do not design his glory, yet they may promote it. *Cyrus* (*Ezra* i. 7.) was instrumental in the building of God's temple in *Jerusalem*. There is some kind of justice, that they should have a temporal reward: God lets them prosper, under whose wing his people are sheltered. God will not be in any man's debt; *Mal.* i. 10. *Who hath kindled a fire on my altar for nought?*

2. God lets men go on in sin, and prosper, that he may leave them more inexcusable, *Rev.* ii. 21. *I gave her space to repent of her fornication,* God adjourns the sessions, spins out his mercies towards sinners; and if they repent not, his patience will be a witness against them, and his justice will be more cleared in their condemnation, *Pf.* li. 4. *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

3. God doth not always let the wicked prosper in their sin; some he doth punish openly, that his justice may be taken notice of, *Pf.* ix. 16. *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth:* that is, his justice is seen by striking men dead in the very act of sin. Thus he struck *Zimri* and *Cosbie* in the act of uncleanness.

4. If God do let men prosper a while in their sin, his vial of wrath is all this while filling; his sword is all this time whetting; and though God may forbear men a while, yet long forbearance is no forgiveness. The longer God is in taking his blow, the heavier it will be at last; as long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with his enemies.

Justice may be as a lion asleep, but at last this lion will awake, and rore upon the sinner. Doth not *Nero* and *Julian* and *Cain* now meet with God's justice?

*Obj.* But God's own people suffer great afflictions, they are injured and persecuted, *Pf.* lxxiii. 14. *All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* How doth this stand with God's justice?

*Ans.* 1. That is a true rule of *St. Austin*, *Judicia Dei possunt esse occulta, non injusta;* "God's ways of judgment are sometimes secret, but never unjust." The Lord never afflicts his people without a cause; so that he cannot be

unjust. There is some good in the godly, therefore the wicked afflict them; there is some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. God's own children have their blemishes, *2 Chron.* xxviii. 10. *Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord?* These spiritual diamonds have they no flaws? Do we not read of the spots of God's children? *Deut.* xxxii. 10. Are not they guilty of much pride, censoriousness, passion, worldliness? Tho', by their profession, they seem to resemble the birds of paradise, to fly above and feed upon the dew of heaven; yet, as the serpent, they lick the dust. And these sins of God's people do more provoke God than others, *Deut.* xxxii. 19. *Because of the provoking of his sons and daughters. The sins of others pierce Christ's side,* these wound his heart: therefore is not God just in all the evils that befall them? *Amos* iii. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.* I will punish you sooner, surer, sorer, than others.

2. The trials and sufferings of the godly are to refine and purify them. God's furnace is in *Sion*, *Is.* xxxi. 9. Is it any injustice in God to put his gold into the furnace to purify it? Is it any injustice in God, by afflicting his people, to make them partakers of his holiness? *Heb.* xii. 10. What doth more proclaim God's faithfulness, than to take such a course with them as may make them better? *Pf.* cxix. 75. *In faithfulness thou hast corrected me.*

3. What injustice is it in God to inflict a lesser punishment, and prevent a greater? The best of God's children have that in them, which is meritorious of hell: now, I pray, doth God do them any wrong, if he useth only the rod, where they have deserved the scorpion? Is the father unjust, if he only corrects his child, who hath deserved to be disinherited? If God deals so favourably with his children, he only puts wormwood in their cup, whereas he might put fire and brimstone: they are rather to admire his mercy, than complain of his injustice.

*Obj.* How can it stand with God's justice, that all men, being equally guilty by nature, God should pass by one, and save another? Why doth not he deal with all alike?

*Ans.* *Rom.* ix. 14. *Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* *Job* viii. 3. *Doth the Almighty pervert justice?*

1. God is not bound to give an account of his actions to his creatures. If none may say to a king, *What dost thou?* *Ecc.* viii. 4. much less

less to God. It is sufficient; God is Lord paramount, he hath a sovereign power over his creatures, therefore can do no injustice, *Rom. ix.*

21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another unto dishonour; God hath a liberty left in his own breast, to save one, and not another; and his justice is not at all impeached or blemished. If two men owe you money, you may, without any injustice, remit the debt to one, and exact it of the other. If two malefactors be condemned to die, the king may pardon one, and not other: he is not unjust if he lets one suffer, because he offended the law; nor if he save the other, because he will make use of his prerogative as he is king. 2. Though some are saved, and others perish, yet there is no unrighteousness in God; because, whoever perisheth, his destruction is of himself, *Hos. xiii. 9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.* God offers grace, the sinner refuseth it; is God bound to give grace? If a surgeon comes to heal a man's wound, he will not be healed, but bolts out his surgeon; is the surgeon bound to heal him? *Prov. i. 24. I have called, and ye refused.* *Psal. lxxxi. 11. Israel would none of me.* God is not bound to force his mercies upon men: if they wilfully oppose the offer of grace, their sin is to be taxed as the cause of their perishing, and not God's justice.*

2. See the difference between God and a great part of the world. They are unjust, 1. in their courts of judicature; they pervert justice, *Isa. x. 1. They decree unrighteous decrees.* The Hebrew word for a judge's robe, signifies *prevarication, deceit, or injustice*: it is often truer of the judge than of the robe; the judge deserves rather to have that name than the robe. What is a good law, without a good judge? Injustice lies in two things, either not to punish where there is a fault, or, to punish where there is no fault: how frequent! again, (2.) Unjust in their dealings. This is, 1. Either in using false weights, *Hos. xii. 7. The balances of deceit are in his hand.* It is sad, to have the Bible in one hand, and false weights in the other. Or, 2. In adulterating commodities. *Isa. i. 22. Thy wine is mixed with water*; when they mix bad grain with good, yet sell it for pure grain. I can never believe he is good in the first table, who is not good in the second. He cannot be godly who is not just. Though God doth not bid you be omnipotent, as he is, yet be just, as he is.

*Use 2. Imitate God in justice.* Let Christ's golden maxim be observed, *Mat. vii. 12. What you would have men to do to you, do ye even so to them.* You would not have them wrong you, neither do you them; rather suffer wrong, than do wrong, *1 Cor. vi. 7. Why do ye not rather take wrong? O be exemplary for justice! Let justice be your ornament, Job xxix. 14. I put on righteousness (viz. justice) as a robe and a diadem.* A robe, for its graceful beauty; and I put it on, & *induebam justitiam.* A judge puts on his robe, and puts it off again at night; but Job did so put on justice, as he did not put it off till death, *semper vestiti.* We must not lay off this robe of justice, till we lay down our tabernacle. If you have any thing of God in you, you will be like him. By every unjust action you do deny yourselves to be Christians, you stain the glory of your profession; heathens will rise up in judgment against you: the sun might sooner alter his course, than he could be turned from doing justice.

*Use 3.* If God be just, there will be a day of judgment. Now things are out of course; sin is rampant, saints are wronged, they are often cast in a righteous cause, they can meet with no justice here, justice is turned into wormwood; but there is a day coming, when God will set things right; he will do every man justice; he will crown the righteous, and condemn the wicked, *Acts xvii. 31. He hath appointed a day, &c.* If God be a just God, he will take vengeance. God hath given men a law to live by, they break it; there must be a day for the execution of offenders: a law not executed, is but like a wooden dagger, for a show. At the last day, God's sword shall be drawn out against offenders; then his justice shall be revealed before all the world, ----- *God will judge in righteousness, Acts xvii. 31. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Gen. xviii. 25.* The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not sip one drop of injustice. At that day shall all mouths be stopt, and God's justice shall be fully vindicated from all the cavils and clamours of unjust men.

*Use 4.* Comfort to the true penitent; as God is a just God, he will pardon him. *Homo agnoscit, Deus ignoscit.* *1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, (i. e. confess and forsake) he is just to forgive us our sins.* Not only merciful but just? Why just? Because he hath promised to forgive such? *Prov. xxviii. 13. If thy heart hath been*



been broken for and from sin, thou mayst not the pardoning thy sin. Shew him his hand and not only plead God's mercy, but his justice for seal, he cannot deny himself.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

**T**HE next attribute is God's goodness or mercy: mercy is the result and effect of God's goodness, *Pf. xxxiii. 5. Pf. cxix. 64.* So then this is the next attribute, God's goodness or mercy. The most learned of the heathens thought they gave their God *Jupiter* two golden characters, when they stiled him *Good* and *Great*; both these meet in God, *Greatness* and *Goodness*, majesty and mercy.

God is, 1. Essentially good in himself. And 2. Relatively good to us. They are both put together, *Pf. cxix. 68. Thou art good, and dost good.* This relative goodness is nothing else but his mercy, which is an innate propenseness in God, to pity and succour such as are in misery. Concerning God's mercy,

*1st*, I shall lay down these twelve positions, 1. It is the great design of the scripture to represent God as merciful. This is a loadstone to draw sinners to him, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, &c.* Here are six expressions to set forth God's mercy, and but one to set forth his justice: who will by no means clear the guilty. *Pf. lvii. 10. God's mercy is far above the heavens, Pf. cviii. 4.* God is represented as a king, and a rainbow was about his throne, *Rev. iv. 2, 3.* The rainbow was an emblem of mercy, the scripture doth oftner represent God in his white robes of mercy than with his garments rolled in blood; oftner with his golden sceptre, than his iron rod.

*Position 2.* God is more inclinable to mercy than wrath. Mercy is his darling attribute, which he most delights in, *Mic. vii. 18.* Mercy pleaseth him. It is delightful to the mother, saith *Chryostom*, to have her breasts drawn: so it is to God, to have the breasts of his mercy drawn, *Isa. xlvii. 4. Fury is not in me;* that is, I do not delight in it. Acts of severity are rather forc'd from God, he doth not afflict willingly. *Lam. iii. 33.* The bee naturally gives honey, it stings only when it is provoked; God doth not punish till he can bear no longer, *Jer. xlv. 22. So that the Lord could*

*bear no longer, because of the evil of your doings.* Mercy is God's right-hand, that he is most used to; inflicting of punishment is called God's strange work, *Isa. xxviii. 21.* he is not used to it. And when the Lord would shave off the pride of a nation, he is said to hire a razor, as if he had none of his own, *Isa. vii. 20. He shall shave with a razor that is hired. He is slow to anger, Pf. ciii. 8. But ready to forgive, Pf. lxxxvi. 5.*

*Position 3.* There is no condition, but we may spy mercy in it: when the church was in captivity, she cries out, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, Lam. iii. 22.* geographers write of *Syracuse* in *Sicily*: it is so situated that the sun is never out of sight. In all afflictions we may see some sun-shine of mercy. That outward and inward troubles do not come together, is mercy.

*Position 4.* Mercy sweetens all God's other attributes: God's holiness without mercy, and his justice without mercy, were terrible. When the water was bitter, and *Israel* could not drink, *Moses* cast a tree into the water, and then they were made sweet. How bitter and dreadful were the other attributes of God, did not mercy sweeten them! Mercy sets God's power on work to help us, it makes his justice become our friend, it shall avenge our quarrels.

*Position 5.* God's mercy is one of the most orient pearls of his crown: it makes his God-head appear amiable and lovely: When *Moses* said to God, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory;* the Lord answered him, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will shew thee mercy,* *Exod. 33. 19.* God's mercy is his glory; his holiness makes him illustrious, his mercy makes him propitious.

*Position 6.* Even the worst taste of God's mercy; such as fight against God's mercy, taste of it: the wicked have some crumbs from mercy's table; *The Lord is good to all, Pf. 145. 5.* The sweet dew drops on the thistle, as well as the rose. The diocese where mercy visits is very

very large: *Pharaoh's* head was crown'd tho' his heart was hardned.

*Position 7.* Mercy coming to us in a covenant is sweetest: it was mercy that God would give *Israel* rain, and bread to the full, and peace, and victory over their enemies, *Lev. xxvi. 4, 5, 6.* But it was a greater mercy that God would be their God, *ver. 12.* To have health is a mercy, but to have Christ and salvation is a greater mercy; this is like the diamond in the ring, it calls a more sparkling lustre.

*Position 8.* One act of mercy engageth God to another. Men argue thus, I have shewn you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more: but, because God hath shewn mercy, he is more ready still to shew mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify; one act of mercy engageth God to more. A parent's love to his child, makes him always giving.

*Position 9.* All the mercy in the creature is derived from God, and is but a drop of this ocean: the mercy and pity a mother hath to her child is from God; he that puts the milk in her breast, puts the compassion in her heart: Therefore God is called, *The Father of mercies, 2 Cor. i. 3.* because he begets all the mercies in the world. If God hath put any kindness into the creature, how much kindness is in him who is the Father of mercy?

*Position 10.* God's mercy, as it makes the saints happy, so it should make them humble. Mercy is not the fruit of our goodness: but the fruit of God's goodness. Mercy is an alms that God bestows; they have no cause to be proud, that live upon the alms of God's mercy, *Job 10. 15. If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: all my righteousness is the effect of God's mercy, therefore I will be humble, and will not lift up my head.*

*Position 11.* It is mercy stays the speedy execution of God's justice: sinners continually provoke God, and make *the fury come up in his face, Ezek. xxxviii. 18.* Whence is it God doth not presently arrest and condemn them? It is not that God cannot do it, for he is armed with omnipotence, but it is from God's mercy; mercy gets a reprieve for the sinner, and stops the speedy process of justice. God would, by his goodness, lead sinners to repentance.

*Position 12.* It is dreadful to have mercy witness against one: how sad was it with *Haman*, when the queen herself accused him? *Eth. vii. 6.* So, when this queen of mercy shall stand up against a person and accuse him, it is only

mercy that saves a sinner. Now, how sad to have mercy become an enemy? if mercy be an accuser, who shall be our advocate? The sinner never escapes hell, when mercy draws up the indictment.

I might shew you several species or kinds of mercy, preventing mercy, sparing mercy, supplying mercy, guiding mercy, accepting mercy, healing mercy, quickning mercy, supporting mercy, forgiving mercy, correcting mercy, comforting mercy, delivering mercy, crowning mercy: but I shall speak of the qualifications or properties of God's mercy.

1. God's mercy is free. To set-up merit is to destroy mercy: nothing can deserve mercy, because we are polluted in our blood; nor force it; we may force God to punish us, not to love us, *Hos. xiv. 4. I will love them freely.* Every link in the chain of salvation, is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free, *Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us in him, according to the good pleasure of his will.* Justification is free, *Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace.* Salvation is free, *Titus iii. 5. According to his mercy he saved us.* Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free: if God should shew mercy only to such as are worthy, he would shew none at all.

2. God's mercy is an overflowing mercy; it is infinite, *Pf. lxxxvi. 5. Plenteous in mercy, Eph. ii. 4. Rich in mercy, Pf. li. 1. Multitude of mercies.* The vessel of wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light, as God is of mercy: God hath morning-mercies, *Lam. iii. 23. His mercies are new every morning;* and night mercies, *Pf. xliii. 8. In the night his fear shall be with me.* God hath mercies under heaven, those we taste of; and in heaven, those we hope for.

3. God's mercy is eternal, *Pf. ciii. 17. The mercy of the Lord is from ever-lasting to ever-lasting.* It is repeated six and twenty times in one psalm, *His mercy endureth for ever: Pf. cxxxvi.* The souls of the blessed shall be ever bathing themselves in this sweet and pleasant ocean of God's mercy. God's anger to his children lasts but a while, *Pf. ciii. 9. But his mercy lasts for ever.* As long as he is God, he will be showing mercy; as his mercy is ever-flowing, so ever-lasting.

*Use 1. Of Information.* It shows us how we are look upon God in prayer, not in his judge's robes, but clothed with a rainbow, full



of *Mercy* and clemency; add wings to prayer. When Jesus Christ ascended up to heaven, that which made him go up thither with joy in prayer, was, *I go to my Father*; so that which should make our hearts ascend with joy in prayer, is, *We are going to the Father of mercy, who sits upon a throne of grace*; go with confidence in this mercy; as when one goes to a fire, it is not doubtingly, perhaps it will warm me, perhaps not.

*Use 2.* Believe in his mercy, *Pf. lii. 8. I will trust in the mercy of God for ever.* God's mercy is a fountain opened, let down the bucket of faith, and you may drink of this fountain of salvation. What greater encouragement to believe than God's mercy? God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons; he is desirous that sinners should touch the golden sceptre of his *Mercy* and live. And this willingness to shew mercy appears two ways.

1. By his intreating of sinners to come and lay hold on this mercy, *Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever will, come, and take the water of life freely.* Mercy woo's sinners, it even kneels down to them. It were strange for a prince to intreat a condemned man to accept a pardon. God saith, Poor sinner, suffer me to love thee, be willing to let me save thee.

2. By his joyfulness when sinners do lay hold on his mercy. What is God the better whether we receive his mercy, or not? What is the fountain profited, that others drink of it? Yet, such is God's goodness, that he rejoiceth at the salvation of sinners, and is glad, when his mercy is accepted of. When the prodigal son came home, how glad was the Father? and he makes a feast, to express his joy: this was but a type or emblem, to show how God rejoiceth when a poor sinner comes in, and lays hold of his mercy. What an encouragement is here to believe in God? He is a God of pardons, *Neh. ix. 17.* Mercy pleaseth him, *Mic. vii. 18.* Nothing doth prejudice us but unbelief. Unbelief stops the current of God's mercy from running: it shuts up God's bowels, closeth the orifice of Christ's wounds, that no healing virtue will come out, *Mat. xiii. 58. He could do no mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* Why dost thou not believe in God's mercy? Is it thy sins discourage? God's mercy can pardon great sins, nay, because they are great, *Pf. xxv. 11.* The sea covers great rocks as well as lesser sands; some that had an hand in crucifying Christ, found mercy. As far as the

heavens are above the earth, so far is God's mercy above our sins, *IJa. lv. 9.* What will tempt us to believe, if not the mercy of God.

*Use 3. Of Caution.* Take heed of abusing this mercy of God. Suck not poison out of the sweet flower of God's mercy: do not think, that because God is merciful, you may go on in sin; this is to make mercy become your enemy. None might touch the ark but the priests, who by their office were more holy: none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but such as are resolved to be holy. To sin because mercy abounds, is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy, is like one that wounds his head, because he hath a plaister: he that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury, *Deut. xxix. 19, 20. If he bless himself, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.* Nothing sweeter than mercy, when it is improved; nothing fiercer, when it is abused; nothing colder than lead, when it is taken out of the mine: nothing more scalding than lead, when heated. Nothing blunter than iron, nothing sharper, when it is whetted. *Pf. ciii. 17. The mercy of the Lord is upon them that fear him.* Mercy is not upon them that sin and fear not, but for them that fear and sin not. God's mercy is an holy mercy; where it pardons, it heals.

*Qu. What shall we do to be interested in God's mercy?*

*Ans. 1.* Be sensible of your wants. See how you stand in need of mercy, pardoning, saving mercy. See yourselves orphans; *Hos. xiv. 3. In thee the fatherless findeth mercy.* God bestows the alms of mercy only on such as are indigent. Be emptied of all opinion of self-worthiness. God pours the golden oil of mercy into empty vessels.

2. Go to God for mercy, *Psal. li. 1. Have mercy upon me, O God!* Put me not off with common mercy that reprobates may have; give me not only alcorns, but pearls; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to save me; give me the cream of thy mercies: Lord! let me have mercy and loving-kindness, *Pf. ciii. 4. Who crowned thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.* Give me such mercy as speaks thy electing love to my soul. O pray for mercy! God hath treasures of mercy;

cy; prayer is the key that opens these treasures: and in prayer, be sure to carry Christ in your arms; all the mercy comes through Christ; 1 Sam. vii. 9. *Samuel took a sucking lamb: carry the lamb Christ in your arms, go in his name, present his merits; say, Lord! here is Christ's blood, which is the price of my pardon: Lord, shew me mercy, because Christ hath purchased it. Tho' God may refuse us when we come for mercy in our own name, yet not when we come in Christ's name: plead Christ's satisfaction, and this is such an argument as God cannot deny.*

*Use 4.* It exhorts such as have found mercy, to three things: 1. To be upon *Gerizim*, the mount of blessing and praising. They have not only heard the King of heaven is merciful, but they have found it so: the honey-comb of God's mercy hath dropt upon them; when in wants, mercy supply'd them; when they were nigh unto death, mercy raised them from the sick-bed; when covered with guilt, mercy pardoned them, Ps. ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.* O how should the vessels of mercy run over with praise! 1 Tim. i. 13. *Who was before a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy.* I was bemiracled with mercy; as the sea overflows and breaks down the banks, so the mercy of God did break down the banks of my sin, and mercy did sweetly flow into my soul. You that have been monuments of God's mercy, should be trumpets of praise; you that have tasted the Lord is gracious, tell others

what experiences you have had of God's mercy, that you may encourage them to seek to him for mercy, Ps. lxxvi. 16. *I will tell you what God hath done for my soul; when I found my heart dead, God's Spirit did come upon me mightily, and the blowing of that wind made the withering flowers of my grace revive.* O tell others of God's goodness, that you may set others a blessing him, and that you may make God's praises live when you are dead.

2. To love God. Mercy should be the attractive of love; Ps. xviii. 1. *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.* The Hebrew word for love, signifies love out of the inward bowels. God's justice may make us fear him, his mercy may make us love him. If mercy will not produce love, what will? We are to love God for giving us our food, much more for giving us grace: for sparing mercy, much more for saving mercy. Sure that heart is made of marble, which the mercy of God will not dissolve in love. *I would hate my own soul, (saith St. Augustine) if I did not find it loving God.*

3. To imitate God in shewing mercy. God is the Father of mercy; shew yourselves to be his children, by being like him. St. Ambrose saith, The sum and definition of religion is, Be rich in works of mercy, be helpful to the bodies and souls of others. Scatter your golden seeds; let the lamp of your profession be filled with the oil of charity. Be merciful in giving and forgiving. *Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.*

## OF THE TRUTH OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's truth; Deut. xxxii. 4.---*A God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he, Psal. lvii. 10. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. A God of truth, Psal. lxxxvi. 15.---Plenteous in truth.* God is the truth. He is true, 1. In a physical sense; true in his being: he hath a real subsistence, and gives a being to others. 2. He is true in a moral sense; he is true *sine errore*, without errors; & *sine fallacia*, without deceit. God is *prima veritas*, the pattern and prototype of truth. There is nothing true but what is in

God, or comes from God. I shall now speak of God's truth, as it is taken for his veracity in making good of his promises, 1 Kings viii. 56. *There hath not failed one word of all his good promise:* the promise is God's bond, God's truth is the seal set to his bond. This is the thing to be explicated and discussed, God's truth in fulfilling his promises.

There are two things to be observed in the promise of God to comfort us: 1. the power of God, whereby he is able to fulfill the promise. God hath promised to subdue our corruption, Mic. vii. 10. *He will subdue our iniquities.* O!



With a believer, my corruption is so strong, that sure I shall never get the mastery of it: but the power of God can fulfil his promise. Thus *Abraham* looked at God's power, *Rom. iv. 21. Being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform.* He believed, that that God, who could make a world, could make dry breasts give suck. This is faith's support, there is nothing too hard for God. He that could bring water out of a rock, is able to bring to pass his promises.

2. The truth of God in the promises: God's truth is the seal set to the promise, *Tit. i. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.* Eternal life, there is the sweetness of the promise: God which cannot lie, there is the certainty of it. Mercy makes the promise, truth fulfils it. God's providences are uncertain, but his promises are the sure mercies of David, *Acts xiii. 24. God is not a man that he should repent,* 1 *Sam. xv. 29.* The word of a prince cannot always be taken, but God's promise is inviolable. God's truth is one of the richest jewels of his crown, and he hath pawned this jewel in a promise, 2 *Sam. xxiii. 5. Altho' my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.* Although my house be not so] that is, though I fail much of that exact purity the Lord requires, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, that he will pardon, adopt, and glorify me; and this covenant is ordered in all things sure: The elements shall melt with fervent heat; but this covenant abides firm and inviolable, being sealed with the truth of God: nay, God hath added to his word, his oath, *Heb. vi. 17.* wherein God pawns his being, life, righteousness to make good the promise. If as oft as we break our vows with God, he should break promise with us, it would be very sad; but his truth is engaged in his promise, therefore it is like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered. We are not (saith Chrysostom) to believe our senses so much, as we are to believe the promises, &c. Our senses may fail us, but the promise cannot, being built upon the Truth of God; God will not deceive the faith of his people, nay, he cannot; God, who cannot lie, hath promised; he can as well part with his Deity, as his Verity. God is said to be abundant in truth, *Exod. xxxiv. 9.* What is that? viz. If God hath made a promise of mercy to his people, he will be so far from coming short

of his word, that he will be better than his word; God often doth more than he hath said, never less. He is abundant in truth.

1. The Lord may sometimes delay a promise, but he will not deny: he may delay a promise: God's promise may ly a good while as seed under ground, but at last it will spring up into a crop. God promised to deliver *Israel* from the iron furnace, but this promise was above four hundred years in travel before it brought forth. *Simeon* had a promise, that he should not depart hence, till he had seen the Lord's Christ. *Luke ii. 26.* but it was a long time first, but a little before his death, that he did see Christ. But tho' God delay the promise, he will not deny. Having given his bond, in due time the money will be paid in.

2. God may change his promise, but he will not break his promise. Sometimes God doth change a temporal promise into a spiritual, *Pf. lxxxv. 12. The Lord shall give that which is good:* perhaps this may not be fulfilled in a temporal sense, but a spiritual. God may let a Christian be cut short in temporals, but God makes it up in spirituals. If he doth not increase the basket and the store, he gives increase of faith, and inward peace; here he changeth his promise, but he doth not break it, he gives that which is better. If a man promiseth to pay me in farthings, and he pays me in a better coin, in gold, he doth not break his promise; *Pf. lxxxix. 33. I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail;* In the Hebrew it is, to lye.

Obj. 1. But how doth this consist with the truth of God? He saith, He will have all to be saved, 1 *Tim. ii. 4.* yet some perish.

Ans. St. *Austin* understands it, not of every individual person, but some of all sorts shall be saved: as in the ark, God saved all the living creatures; not every bird or fish were saved, for many perished in the flood; but all, that is, some of every kind were saved; so God will have all to be saved, that is, some of all nations.

Obj. It is said, *Christ died for all; he is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,* *John. i. 29.* how doth this consist with God's truth, when some are Vessels of wrath? *Rom. ix. 22.*

Ans. 1. We must distinguish of world. The world is taken either in a limited sense, for the world of the elect; or in a larger sense, for both elect and reprobates. Christ takes away the

the sins of the world, that is, the world of the elect.

2. We must distinguish of Christ's dying for the world. Christ died sufficiently for all, not effectually. There is the value of Christ's blood, and the virtue: Christ's blood hath value enough to redeem the whole world, but the virtue of it applied only to such as believe: Christ's blood is meritorious for all, not efficacious. All are not saved, because some put away salvation from them, *Acts* xiii. 46. and vilify Christ's blood, counting it an unholy thing, *Heb.* x. 29.

*Use 1.* Here is a great pillar for our faith, the truth of God. Were not he a God of truth, how could we believe in him? Our faith were fancy; but he is Truth itself, and not a word he hath spoken shall fall to the ground. *Truth is the object of trust.* The truth of God is an unmoveable rock, we may venture our salvation here, *Isa.* lix. 15. *Truth faileth: truth on earth doth, but not truth in heaven:* God can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. Hath God said, he will be good to the soul that seeks him, *Lam.* iii. 25. He will give rest to the weary? *Mat.* xi. 28. Here is a safe anchorhold, he will not alter the thing which is gone forth of his lips. The public faith of heaven is engaged for believers: can we have better security? The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power, and shall not our faith hang upon the word of God's truth? Where can we rest our faith but upon God's faithfulness? There is *nothing else* we can believe in, but the truth of God: we cannot trust in an arm of flesh, we cannot trust in our own hearts: this is to build upon the quick-sands; but the truth of God is a *golden pillar* for faith to stay upon: God cannot deny himself, *2 Tim.* ii. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* Not to believe God's veracity, is to affront God, *1 John* v. 10. *He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.* A person of honour cannot be more affronted or provoked, than when he is not believed. He that denies God's truth, makes the promise no better than a *forged deed*; and can there be a greater affront offered to God?

*Use 2. Of terror to the wicked.* God is a God of truth, and he is true in his *threatnings*? the threatnings are a flying roll against sinners. God hath threatened to wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on still in his trespasses, *Ps.* lxxviii. 21. He hath threatened to judge adul-

terers, *Heb.* xiii. 3. To be avenged upon the malicious, *Ps.* x. 14. *Thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy own hand: To rain fire and brimstone upon the sinner,* *Ps.* xi. 6. And God is as true in his threatnings as his promises: God hath oft, to shew his truth, executed his threatnings, and let his thunderbolts of judgment fall upon sinners in this life; he struck *Herod* in the act of his pride; he hath punished blasphemers: *Olympius*, an *Arrian* bishop, reproached and blasphemed the blessed Trinity; immediately lightning fell down from heaven upon him, and consumed him. God is as true in his threatnings as his promises: let us fear in the threatening, that we may not feel it.

*Use 3.* Is God a God of truth? let us be like God in truth. 1. We must be true in our words. *Pythagoras* being asked what made men like God? answered, "When they speak truth." It is the note of a man that shall go to heaven, *Ps.* xv. 2. *He speaketh the truth from his heart.* Truth in words is opposed, (1.) To lying, *Eph.* iv. 25. *Putting away lying, speak every one truth to his neighbour.* Lying is when one speaks that for a truth, which he knows to be false. A liar is most opposite to the God of truth. There is (as *Austin* saith) two sorts of lies, 1. *An officious lye*, when a man tells a lye for his profit; as, when a tradesman saith his commodity cost him so much, when perhaps it did not cost him half so much: he that will lye in his trade, shall ly in hell. (2.) *A jesting lye*; when a man tells a lye in sport, to make others merry, he goes laughing to hell. When you tell a lye, you make yourselves like the devil, *John* viii. 44. *The devil is a liar, and the father of it.* He deceived our first parents by a lie. Some are so wicked, that they will not only speak an untruth, but will swear to it; nay, they will wish a curse upon themselves, if that untruth be not true. As I have read of a woman, one *Anne Avaries*, 1575. who being in a shop, wished that she might sink, if she had not paid for the wares she took; she fell down speechless immediately, and died in the place. A liar is not fit to live in a commonwealth. Lying takes away all society and converse with men; how can you converse with him, whom you cannot believe what he saith? Lying shuts men out of heaven, *Rev.* xxii. 25. *Without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* And as it is a great sin to tell a lye, so it is a worse sin to teach a lye, *Isa.* ix. 15.



*The prophet that teacheth lies.* He who broacheth error, teacheth lies; he spreads the plague; he not only damns himself, but helps to damn others. (2.) Truth in words is opposed to dissembling. The heart and tongue should go together, as the dial goes exactly with the sun. To speak fair to one's face, and not to mean what one speaks, is no better than a lie: *Pf. lv. 21. His words were smoother than oil, but war was in his heart.* Some have an art at this, they can flatter and hate. *Hierom*, speaking of the *Arrians*, saith, *they pretended friendship, they kissed my hands, but plotted mischief against me. Pf. xxix. 5. A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.* Impia sub dulci melle venena latent---*Falshood in friendship is a lie.* Counterfeiting of friendship is worse than counterfeiting of money. This is contrary to God who is a God of truth.

2. We must be true in our profession of religion. Let practice go along with profession; *Eph. iv. 24. Righteousness and true holiness.*

Hypocrisy in religion is a lie: the hypocrite is like a face in a glass, there is the show of a face, but no true face: so he makes a shew of holiness, but hath no truth of it; it is but the face in the glass. *Ephraim* pretended to be that which he was not; and what saith God of him? *Hos. xi. 12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies:* By a lie in our words we deny the truth; by a lie in our profession we disgrace it. Not to be what we profess to God, is telling a lie; and the scripture makes it little better than blasphemy, *Rev. ii. 9. I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.* O! I beseech you, labour in this to be like God, he is a God of truth; he can as well part with his Deity as his verity: be, I say, like God, be true in your words, be true in your profession; God's children are children that will not lie, *Isa. lxlii. 9. When God sees Truth in the inward parts, and lips in which is no guile, now he sees his own image in you: this draws God's heart towards you; likeness draws love.*



## BUT ONE GOD.

**Q. V.** THE fifth question is, *Are there more Gods than one?*

*Ans.* There is but one only, the living and true God.

THAT there is a God, hath been proved; and those that will not believe the verity of his essence, shall feel the severity of his wrath, *Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* He is the only God, *Deut. iv. 39. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath there is none else. Isa. xlv. 21. A just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.* There are many titular gods: kings represent God; their regal sceptre is an emblem of his power and authority. Judges are called gods, *Pf. lxxxv. 5. I have said, ye are gods, viz. set in God's place to do justice; but dying gods, v. 6. Ye shall die like men, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. There be that are called gods; but to us there is but one God.*

*Argument 1.* There is but one First Cause that hath its Being of itself, and on which all other beings depend. As in the heavens, the *primum mobile* moves all the other orbs, so

God gives life and motion to every thing existent. There can be but one God, because there is but one First Cause.

2. There is but one infinite Being, therefore there is but one God. There cannot be two infinities, *Jer. xxiii. 24. Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?* If there be one infinite, filling all places at once, how can there be any room for another infinite to subsist?

3. There is but one Omnipotent Power. If there be two Omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two: that which one would do, the other power being equal, would oppose, and so all things would be brought into a confusion. If a ship should have two pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other; when one would sail, the other would cast anchor: here were a confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument that there is but one Omnipotent, one God that rules all. *Isa. xlv. 6. I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.*

*Use 1. Of information.* If there be but one God,

God, then it excludes all other gods. Some have feigned that there were two gods; so the *Valentinians*: others, that there were many gods; so the *Polytheites*. The *Persians* worshipped the sun; the *Egyptians* the lion and elephant; the *Grecians* worshipped *Jupiter*: these, I may say, err, not knowing the scriptures, Mat. xxii. 29. Their faith is a fable. *God hath given them up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, that they may be damned.* 2 Thess. ii. 11.

2. If there be but one God, then there can be but one true religion in the world, Eph. iv. 5. *One Lord, one faith.* If there were many gods, then there might be many religions, every God would be worshipped in his way; but if there be but one God, there is but one religion; one Lord, one Faith. Some say, we may be saved in any religion: it is absurd to imagine, that God, who is *One in essence*, should appoint several religions in which he will be worshipped. It is as dangerous to set up a false religion, as to set up a false god. There are many ways to hell: men may go thither which way their fancy leads them; but there is but one direct road to heaven, viz. faith and holiness. There is no way to be saved but this: as there is but one God, so there is but one true religion.

3. If there be but one God, then you have but One that you need chiefly to study to please, and that is God. If there were divers gods, we should be hard put to it how to please them all; one would command one thing, another the quite contrary: and to please two contrary masters, is impossible: but there is but one God, therefore you have but *One to please*. As in a kingdom there is but one king, therefore every one seeks to ingratiate himself into his favour, Prov. xix. 6. so there is but one true God; therefore here lies our main work, to please him. Be sure to please God, whoever else you displease. This was *Enoch's* wisdom, Heb. xi. 5. he had this testimony before he died, that *he pleased God*.

Q. What doth this pleasing God imply?

Ans. 1. We please God when we comport with his will. 'It was Christ's meat and drink to do his father's will, John iv. 34. and so he pleased him, Mat. iii. 17. *A voice came from heaven, saying, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.* It is the will of God that we should be holy, 1 Thess. iv. 11. Now, when we are bespangled with holiness, our lives are walking Bibles; this is according to God's will, and it pleaseth him.

2. We please God, when we do the work

that he sets us about, John xvii. 4. *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, viz. my mediatory work.* Many finish their lives, but do not finish their work. Our work God hath cut out for us, is to observe the *first* and *second table*. In the *first*, is set down our duty towards God; in the *second* our duty towards man. Such as make morality the chief and sole part of religion, set the second table above the first; nay, they take away the first table: for, if prudence, justice, temperance, be enough to save, then what needs the first table? and so our worship towards God shall be quite left out: but those two tables, which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

• 3. We please God, when we dedicate our heart to give him the best of every thing. *Abel* gave God the fat of the offering, Gen. iv. 4. *Domitian* would not have his image carved in wood or iron, but in gold. Then we please God, when we serve him with love, fervency, alacrity; we give him golden services: herein lies our wisdom and piety, to praise God. There is but one God, therefore there is but One whom we have chiefly to please, namely, God.

4. If there be but one God, then we must pray to none but God. The papists pray to saints and angels: 1. To saints: a popish writer saith, *when we pray to the saints departed, they being touched with compassion, say the like to God for us, as the disciples did to Christ for the Canaanitish woman*, Mat. xv. 23. *Send her away, for she crieth after us.* The saints above know not our wants, Isa. lxiii. 16. *Abraham is ignorant of us*; or, if they did, we have no warrant to pray to them. Prayer is a part of divine worship, which must be given only to God. 2. They pray to angels: angel-worship is forbidden, Col. ii. 18, 19. and that we may not pray to angels, is clear from Rom. x. 14. *How shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?* We may not pray to any, but whom we may believe in; but we may not believe in an angel, therefore, we may not pray to him. There is but one God, and it is a sin to invoke any but only God.

5. If there be but one God, who is above all, Eph. iv. 6. then he must be loved above all. 1. We must love him with a love of appretiation; set the highest estimate on him, who is the only fountain of being and bliss. 2. We must love him with a love of complacency: *amor est complacentia amantis in amato*, Aquin. Our love to other things must be more indifferent; some drops



drops of love may run beside to the creature, but the full stream must run towards God: the creature may have the milk of our love, but we must keep the cream of our love for God: God who is above all, must be loved above all, *Pf. lxxiii. 25. There is none on earth whom I desire in comparison of thee.*

*Use 2. Of caution.* If there be but one God, then let us take heed of setting up more gods than One: *Pf. xvi. 4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another God; their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.* God is a jealous God, and he will not endure that we should have other gods: it is easy to commit idolatry with the creature: 1. Some make a god of pleasure, *2 Tim. iii. 4. Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.* Whatever we love more than God, we make a God. 2. Others make money their God: the covetous man worships the image of gold, therefore he is called an idolater, *Eph. v. 5. That which a man trusts to, he makes his god; but he makes the wedge of gold his hope: he makes money his creator, redeemer and comforter: it is his creator; if he hath money, then he thinks he is made: it is his redeemer; if he be in danger, he trusts in his money to redeem him out: it is his comforter; if at any time he be sad, the golden harp drives away the evil spirit: so that money is his God.* God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth. 3. Another makes a god of his child, sets his child in God's room, and so provokes God to take it away. If you lean too hard upon a glass, it will break; many break their children by leaning too hard upon them. 4. Others make a god of their belly, *Phil. iii. 19. Whose god is their belly.* *Clemens Alexandrinus* writes of a fish that hath its heart in its belly; an emblem of *Epicures*, their heart is in their belly, they mind nothing but indulging the sensual appetite; they do *sacrificari lari*; their belly is their god, and to this they pour drink-offerings: thus men make many gods. The apostle names the wicked man's trinity, *1 John ii. 16. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life: the lust of the flesh, pleasure; the lust of the eye, money; pride of life, honour: O take heed of this! whatever you deify besides God, will prove a bramble, and fire will come out of this bramble, and devour you, Judg. ix. 15.*

*Use 3. Of reproof.* If the Lord Jehovah be the only true God, then it reproves those who

renounce the true God; I mean, such as seek to familiar spirits: this is too much practised among them that call themselves Christians. It is a sin condemned by the law of God, *Deut. xviii. 11. There shall not be found among you any that consults with familiar spirits.* How ordinary is this? If people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizzards to know how they may come by their goods again. What is this but consulting with the devil? and so you renounce God and your baptism. What, because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too? *2 Kings i. 6. Thus saith the Lord, is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Baalzebub?* So, is it not because you think there is not a God in heaven, that ye ask counsel of the devil? If any here be guilty, be deeply humbled, ye have renounced the true God; better be without the goods ye have lost, than have the devil help you to them again.

*Use 4. Of exhortation.* If there be but one God; as God is one, so let them that serve him be one. This is that Christ prayed so heartily for, *John xvii. 21. That they all may be one.* Christians should be one, 1. In judgment; the apostle exhorts to be all of one mind, *1 Cor. i. 10. How sad is it to see religion wearing a coat of divers colours; to see Christians of so many opinions, and going so many different ways? It is satan hath sown these tares of division, Mat. xiii. 39. He first divided men from God, and now divides one man from another.* 2. One in affection. They should have one heart, *Acts iv. 32. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul.* As in music, though there be several strings of a viol, yet all make one sweet harmony: so, though there are several Christians, yet there should be one sweet harmony of affection among them. There is but one God, and they that serve him should be one. There is nothing would render the true religion more lovely, or make more profelytes to it, than to see the professors of it tied together with the heart-strings of love, *Pf. cxxxiii. 1. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is, to see brethren live together in unity! It is as the sweet dew on Hermon, and the fragrant ointment poured on Aaron's head. If God be one, let all that profess him be of one mind, and one heart; this fulfils Christ's prayer, that they all may be one.*

2. If there be but one God, let us labour to clear the title, that this God is ours, *Pf. xlvi. 14.*

14. *This God is our God.* What comfort can it be to hear that there is a God, and that he is the only God, unless he be our God? What is *Deity* without *property*? O let us labour to clear the title. Beg the holy spirit: the spirit works by faith; by faith we are one with Christ, and through Christ we come to have God for our God, and so all his glorious fulness is made over to us by a deed of gift.

*Use 5.* What cause have we to be thankful, that we have the knowledge of the only true God? How many are brought up in blindness? Some worship *Mahomet*; divers of the *Indians* worship the devil; they light a candle to him,

that he should not hurt them. Such as know not the true God, must needs stumble in hell in the dark. O be thankful that we are born in such a climate, where the light of the gospel hath shined! to have the knowledge of the true God, is more than if we had mines of gold, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices; especially if God hath savingly revealed himself to us; if he hath given us eyes to see the light; if we so know God, as to be known of him, as to love him, and believe in him, *Matt. xi. 25.* We can never be enough thankful to God, that he hath hid the knowledge of himself from the wise and prudent of the world, and hath revealed it unto us.



## OF THE TRINITY.

Q. VI. **H**OW many persons are there in the Godhead?

*Ans.* Three persons, yet but one God.

1 John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.*

God is but one, yet there are three distinct persons subsisting in one godhead. This is a sacred mystery, which the light within could never have discovered. As the two natures in Christ, yet but one person, is a wonder, so three persons, yet but one Godhead. I am in a great deep, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God; yet not three Gods, but one God. The three persons in the blessed trinity are distinguished, but not divided; three substances, but one essence. This is a divine riddle, where one makes three, and three make but one. Our narrow thoughts can no more comprehend the trinity in unity, than a little nut-shell will hold all the water in the sea. Let me shadow it out by this similitude: in the body of the sun, there is the substance of the sun, the beams, and the heat; the beams are begotten of the sun, the heat proceeds both from the sun and the beams: but these three, though different, are not divided; they all three make but one sun: so in the blessed trinity, the Son is begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds from both; yet though they are three distinct persons, yet but one God. First, let me speak of the unity in trinity; then of the trinity in unity.

1<sup>st</sup>. Of the unity in trinity. The unity of

the persons in the Godhead consists in two things:

1. The identity of essence. In the trinity there is an oneness of essence: the three persons are of the same divine nature and substance; so that in *Deo non est magis & minus*, there are no degrees in the Godhead; one person is not God more than another.

2. The unity of the persons in the Godhead, consists in the mutual in-being of them, or their being in one another. The three persons are so united, that one person is in another, and with another, *John xvii. 21. Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.*

2<sup>dly</sup>, Let me speak of the trinity in unity.

1. The first person in the trinity is God the Father: he is called the first person, in respect of *order*, not *dignity*; for God the father hath no essential perfections which the other persons have not; he is not more wise, more holy, more powerful, than the other persons are; a priority, not a superiority.

2. The second person in the trinity is *Jesus Christ*, who is begotten of the Father before all time, *Prov. viii. 23, 24, 25. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there was no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills, was I brought forth.* Which scripture declares the eternal generation of the son of God: this second person in the Trinity, who is Jehovah, is become our Jesus. The scripture calls him the branch of *David*,



Jer. xxii. 5. and I may call him the flower of the virgin, having assumed our nature. *By him all that believe are justified*, Acts xiii. 39.

3. The third person in the Trinity, is the *Holy Ghost*, who proceeds from the Father and the Son: his work is to illuminate the mind, and inkindle sacred motions. The essence of the spirit is in heaven, and every where; but the influence of it is in the hearts of believers: This is that blessed spirit, who gives us the holy unction, 1 John ii. 20. Though Christ merits grace for us, it is the Holy Ghost works it in us: Though Christ makes the purchase, it is the Holy Ghost makes the assurance, and seals us up to the day of redemption. Thus I have spoken of all the three persons: the Trinity of persons may be proved out of *Mat. iii. 16. Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight-way out of the water, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son.* Here are three names given to the three persons. He who spake with a voice from heaven, was God the father; he who was baptized in *Jordan*, was God the Son; he who descended in the likeness of a dove, was God the Holy Ghost. Thus I have shewn you the unity of essence, and the Trinity of persons.

Use 2. It confutes the *Jews* and the *Turks*, who believe only the first person in the Godhead: this cuts asunder the sinews of our comfort. Take away the distinction of the persons in the Trinity, and you overthrow man's redemption; for God the Father being offended with man for sin, how shall he be pacified without a mediator? This mediator is Christ, he makes our peace! And Christ having died, and shed his blood, how shall this blood be applied, but by the Holy Ghost? Therefore, if there be not three persons in the Godhead, man's salvation cannot be wrought out: if there be no second person in the Trinity, then there is no redeemer; if no third person, then there is no comforter. And so the plank is taken away by which we should get to heaven.

2. It confutes the execrable opinion of the *Socinians*, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus; they make him only to be a creature of an higher rank. As the papists blot out the second commandment, so the *Socinians* would the second person in the Trinity. If to oppose Christ's members be such a sin, what is it to oppose Christ himself? (1.) Jesus Christ is co-equal with God the Father, *Phil. ii. 6. He thought*

*it no robbery to be equal with God.* (2.) He is co-eternal with God the Father, *Prov. viii. 23, I was from the beginning*; for else there was a time when God was without a Son, and so he should be no father; nay, else there was a time when God was without his glory, for Christ is *the brightness of his Father's glory*, Heb. i. 3. (3.) He is co-essential with God the Father. The Godhead subsists in Christ, *Col. ii. 9. In whom dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily.* It is said, not only Christ was with God before the beginning, but he was with God, *John i. 1. and 1 Tim. iii. 16. God manifest in the flesh.* The title of Lord, so often given to Christ, in the new testament, doth answer to the title of *Jehovah* in the old testament, *Deut. xvi. 5. Mat. xxii. 37.* so that Christ hath a co-eternity and consubstantiality with his Father, *John x. 30. I and my Father are one.* It were blasphemy for any angel to speak thus! yet further, to prove Christ's Godhead, consider, 1<sup>st</sup>, The glorious incommunicable attributes belonging to God the Father, are ascribed to Christ. 1. Is God the Father omnipotent? So is Jesus Christ. He is the Almighty, *Rev. i. 8.* he creates, *Col. i. 16.* 2. Is God the Father infinitely immense, filling all places; *Jer. xxiii. 24.* so is Jesus Christ. While Christ was on the earth by his bodily presence, he was at the same time in the bosom of the father, *John iii. 13.* in regard of his divine presence. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The same *jura regalia*, or prerogatives royal, which belongs to God the Father, belong also to Christ: (1) Doth God the Father seal pardons, this is a flower of Christ's crown, *Mat. ix. 2. Thy sins be forgiven thee*: Nor doth Christ only remit sin *organice*, as ministers do, by virtue of a power delegated to them from God; but Christ doth it by his own power and authority. (2) Is God the father the adequate object of faith? Is he to be believed in? So is his Son, *John xiv. 1.* (3) Doth adoration belong to God the Father? So it doth to the Son, *Heb. i. 6. Let all the angels of God worship him.* How sacrilegious therefore is the *Socinian*, who would rob Christ of the best flower of his crown, his godhead? They that deny Christ to be God, must greatly wrest, or else deny the scripture to be the word of God.

2. It confutes the *Arrians*, who deny the Holy Ghost to be God. The eternal Godhead subsists in the Holy Ghost, *John xvii. 13. He shall guide you in all truth.* Christ speaks not there of an attribute, but of a person: and that the Godhead subsists in the person of the Holy Ghost,



Ghost, appears thus; the spirit, who gives diversity of gifts, is said to be the same Lord, and the same God, *1 Cor. xii. 5, 6*. The black and unpardonable sin is said, in a special manner, to be committed against the Godhead subsisting in the Holy Ghost, *Matth. xii. 32*. *The mighty power of God is made manifest by the Holy Ghost*; he changeth the hearts of men. The devil would have Christ prove himself to be God, by turning stones into bread; but thus the Holy Ghost shews his Godhead, by turning stones into flesh, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26*. *I will take away the stony heart; and give you a heart of flesh*. Yet further, the power and Godhead of the holy Ghost appeared in the effecting the glorious conception of our Lord Jesus Christ; the very shadow of the Holy Ghost made a virgin conceive, *Luke i. 35*. The Holy Ghost works miracles, which transcend the sphere of nature; as raising the dead, *Rom. viii. 11*. To him belongs divine worship, our souls and bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor. vi. 19*. in which temples he is to be worshipped, *v. 20*. We are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost; therefore either we must believe his Godhead, or renounce our baptism in his name. Methinks, it were enough for such men, as have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, *Acts xix. 2*. to deny his Deity; but that any who go for Christians, should deny this article of their creed, seems to me very strange. They who would wittingly and willingly blot out the third person, shall have their names blotted out of the book of life.

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* 1<sup>st</sup>, Believe this doctrine, the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence. The Trinity is purely an object of faith: the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom this mystery: but where reason cannot wade, there faith must swim. There are some truths in religion may be demonstrated by reason; as that there is a God: But the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence is wholly supernatural, and must be believed by faith. This sacred doctrine, though it be not against reason, yet it is above reason. Those illuminated philosophers, that could find out the causes of things, and discourse of the magnitude and influence of the stars, the nature of minerals, could never, by their deepest search, find out the mystery of the Trinity: This is of divine revelation, and must be adored with humble believing. We can be no good Christians, with-

out the firm belief of the Trinity. How can we pray to God the Father, but in the name of Christ, and through the help of the Spirit? Believe the glorious Trinity. How are the Quakers to be abhorred, who go under the name of Christians, yet undervalue and renounce Jesus Christ. I have read of some of the Quakers, who speak thus; *We deny the person of him whom you call Christ, and affirm, That they who expect to be saved by that Christ without, will be damned in that faith*. Could the devil himself speak worse blasphemy? They would pull up all religion by the roots, and take away that corner-stone, on which the hope of our salvation is built.

2<sup>ly</sup>, If there be one God subsisting in three persons, then let us give, (1.) Equal reverence to all the persons in the Trinity. There is not more or less in the Trinity; the Father is not more God than the Son and Holy Ghost. There is an order in the Godhead, but no degrees; One person hath not a majority or supereminency above another, therefore we must give equal worship to all the Persons, *John v. 23*. *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*. Adore unity in Trinity.

(2.) Obey all the Persons in the blessed Trinity; for all of them are God. 1. Obey God the Father: his words, either preceptive or minatory, must be observed. Christ himself, as man, obeyed God the Father, *John iv. 34*. much more then must we, *Deut. xxvii. 10*.

2. Obey God the Son, *Eph. ii. 12*. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry*: Kiss him with a kiss of obedience: Christ's commands are not grievous, *1 John v. 3*. Nothing he commands, but is for our interest and benefit: O then kiss the Son! Why do the elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ, and fall down before the lamb? *Rev. iv. 10, 11*, but to testify their subjection, and to profess their readiness to serve and obey him.

3. Obey God the Holy Ghost. Our souls are breathed into us by the glorious Spirit, *Job xxxiii. 4*. *The Spirit of God hath made me*. Our souls are adorned by the blessed Spirit; every grace is a divine sparkle lighted in the soul by the Holy Ghost. Nay more, the Spirit of God sanctified Christ's human nature: he united it with the divine, and sited the man Christ to be our Mediator. Well then doth this third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost deserve to be obeyed; he is God, and this tribute of homage and obedience is to be paid him by us.



OF THE CREATION.

Q. VII. *WHAT are the decrees of God?*

*Ans.* The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever shall come to pass.

I should now come to speak concerning the decrees of God, but I have already spoken something to this under the attribute of God's immutability. God is unchangeable in his essence, and he is unchangeable in his decrees; his counsel shall stand: he hath decreed the issue of all things, and carries them on to their period by his providence; and therefore I shall proceed to the execution of his decrees.

Q. VIII. The next question is, *What is the work of creation?*

*Ans.* It is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, &c.

Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

The creation is glorious to behold, it is a pleasant and fruitful study. Some think that *Isaac*, when he went abroad into the fields to meditate, it was in the book of the creatures. The creation is the heathen man's bible, the plowman's primmer, the traveller's perspective-glass, thro' which he receives the species and representation of those infinite excellencies which are in God. The creation is a large volume, in which God's works are bound up; and this volume hath three great leaves in it, heaven, earth, sea.

The author of the creation is God, so it is in the text, *God created*. The world was created in time, and could not be from eternity, as *Aristotle* thought. The world must have a maker, it could not make itself. If one should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that there had been some artificer there to raise such goodly structures; so this great fabric of the world could not create itself, it must have some builder and maker, and that is God; *In the beginning God created*. To imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by the Lord Jehovah, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to

be drawn without the hand of a limner, *Acts xvii. 24. God that made the world and all things therein.*

In the work of creation there are two things to be considered: I. The making, II. The adorning of it.

I. The making of the world. Here consider, 1. God made the world without any pre-existent matter. This is the difference between generation and creation. In generation there is *materia habilis & disposita*, some matter to work upon: but in creation there is no pre-existent matter. God brought all this glorious fabric of the world out of the womb of nothing. We see our beginning, it was nothing. Some brag of their birth and ancestry; you see how little cause they have to boast, they came of nothing.

2. God made the world with a word. When *Solomon* was to build a temple, he needed many workmen, and they all had tools to work with; but God wrought with tools, *Pf. xxxiii. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made*. The disciples wondered that Christ could with a word calm the sea, *Mat. viii. 26, 27*. But it was more with a word to make the sea.

3. God made all things at first very good, *Gen. i. 31. no defect nor deformity*. The creation came out of God's hands a curious piece; it was a fair copy, without any blot, written with God's own fingers, *Pf. viii. 3. So perfect was God's work*.

II. The adorning of the world, first, God made this great lump and mass, *Rudis indigestaque moles*. and then beautified it, and put it into a dress. He divided the sea and the earth, he deck'd the earth with flowers, the trees with fruit; But what is beauty when it is mask'd over? Therefore, that we might behold this glory, God made the light. The heavens were bespangled with the sun, moon, and stars, that so the world's beauty might be beheld and admired. God, in the creation, began with things less noble and excellent, vegetables, and sensitives; and then the rational creatures, angels and men. Man was the most exquisite piece in the creation: He is a microcosm or little world.

world. Man was made with deliberation and counsel, *Gen. i. 26. Let us make man.* It is the manner of artificers to be more than ordinary accurate, when they are about their master-pieces. Man was to be a master-piece of this visible world, therefore God did consult about the making so rare a piece. A solemn counsel of the sacred persons in the Trinity was called, *Let us make man, and let us make him in our own image.* On the king's coin his image or effigies is stamp'd; so God stamp'd his image on man, and made him partake of many divine qualities.

I shall speak, 1. Of the parts of man's body: (1.) The head, the most excellent architectonical part, it is the fountain of spirits, and the seat of reason. In nature the head is the best piece, but in grace the heart excels. (2.) The Eye, it is the beauty of the face; it shines and sparkles like a lesser sun in the body. The eye occasions much sin, and therefore well may it have tears in it. (3.) The Ear, which is the conduit-pipe through which knowledge is conveyed. Better lose our seeing than our hearing, for *faith cometh by hearing*, *Rom. x. 17.* To have an ear open to God, is the best jewel on the ear. (4.) The Tongue, *David* calls the Tongue his glory, *Pf. xvi. 9.* Because it is an instrument to set forth the glory of God: the soul at first was a viol in tune to praise God, and the tongue did make the music. God hath given us two ears, but one tongue, to shew that we should be swift to hear, but slow to speak. God hath set a double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue. (5.) The Heart, this is a noble part, and seat of life.

2. The Soul of man: this is the man of the man. Man, in regard of his soul, partakes with the angels; nay, as *Plato* saith, The understanding, will, and conscience are a glass that resemble the Trinity. The soul is the diamond in the ring, the soul is a vessel of honour; God himself is serv'd in this vessel. It is a sparkle of celestial brightness, saith *Damascene*. If *David* did so admire the rare contexture and workmanship of his body, *Pf. cxxxix. 14, 15. I am wonderfully made, I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.* If the cabinet be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? How richly is the soul embroidered? Thus you see how glorious a work the creation is, and man especially, who is the epitome of the world.

Q. But why did God make the world?

A. 1. Negatively: not for himself; he did not need it, being infinite. He was happy before the world was, in reflecting upon his own sublime excellencies and perfections. 2. God did not make the world to be a place of mansion for us, we are not to abide here for ever. Heaven is the mansion-house, *John xiv. 2.* The world is only a passage room to eternity; the world is to us as the wilderness was to *Israel*, not to rest in, but to travel thro' to the glorious *Canaan*. The world is a tyring-room to dress our souls in, not a place where we are to stay for ever. The apostle tells us of the world's funerals, *2 Pet. iii. 10. The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.*

2. Positively: God made the world to demonstrate his own glory. The world is a looking-glass, in which we may see the power and goodness of God shine forth; *The heavens declare the glory of God, Pf. xix. 1.* The world is like a curious piece of arras or tapestry, in which we may see the skill and wisdom of him that made it.

Use. 1. Did God create the world? This convinceth us of the truth of his Godhead: to create is proper to a Deity, *Acts xvii. 24.* This convinced *Plato* of a Deity, when he saw all the world could not make a lie. Thus God proves himself to be the true God, and distinguisheth himself from idols, *Jer. x. 11.* It is written in *Chaldee*, *Thus shall ye say to them, The Gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish.* Who but God can create? The creation is enough to convince the heathen that there is a God. There are two books out of which God will judge and condemn the heathen, viz. the book of *Conscience*, *Rom. ii. 15. Who have the law written in their heart:* and the book of the *Creation*, *Rom. ii. 20. The invisible things of him are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* The world is full of emblems and hieroglyphics; every star in the sky, every bird that flies in the air, is a witness against the heathen. A creature could not make itself.

2. Here is a mighty support for faith, God creates. He that made all things with a word, what cannot he do? He can create strength in weakness; he can create a supply of our wants. What a foolish question was that, *Pf. lxxviii. 19. Can he furnish a table in the wilderness?*

Cannot



Cannot he that made the world, do much more? *Pf. cxxiv. 8. Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* Rest on this God for help, who made heaven and earth. The work of creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so it is a stay to faith. Is thy heart hard? he can with a word create softness. Is it unclean, he can create purity; *Pf. li. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God.* Is the church of God low, he can create *Jerusalem* a praise, *Isa. lxxv. 18.* No such golden pillar for faith to stay upon, as a creating power.

3. Did God make this world full of beauty and glory, every thing very good? then, what an evil thing is sin, that hath put out of frame the whole creation! Sin hath much eclipsed the beauty, sowed the sweetness, and marred the harmony of the world. How bitter is that gall, a drop whereof can embitter a whole sea? Sin hath brought vanity and vexation into the world, yea, a curse. God cursed the ground for man's sake, *Gen. iii.* There were several fruits of the curse.

1. *In sorrow shalt thou eat it, v. 17.* By that word *Sorrow*, is to be understood all the troubles and cares of this life. 2. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, v. 19.* In innocency Adam did till the ground, (he must not live idly) but it was rather a delight than a labour; that tilling was without toiling. The eating in sorrow, and the sweat of the brow, came in after sin. 3. *Thorns and thistles shall the ground bring forth, ver. 18.*

*Q. Whether in innocency did not the earth bear thorns, because it is threatned as a punishment?*

*A.* It is likely it did bear thorns; for, when God had done creating, he made no new species, or kinds of things: but the meaning is, Now, after sin the earth should bring forth more plenty of thorns, and now those thorns should be hurtful, and choke the corn, which hurtful quality was not in them before. Ever since the fall, all the comforts of this life have a thorn and a thistle in them. 4. The fourth thing of the curse was the driving man out of paradise, *v. 24. So he drove out the man.* God at first brought Adam into paradise, as into an house ready furnished, or as a king into his throne, *Gen. i. 28. Have dominion over every living thing that moveth;* now God's driving Adam out of paradise, signified his dethroning and banishing him, that he might look after an heavenly and a better paradise. 5. A fifth fruit of the curse was death, *v. 19. To dust thou shalt return.*

Death was not natural in Adam, it came in after sin. *Josephus* is of opinion, man should have died tho' he had continued in innocency, only he should have had a longer term of years added to his life; but out of question, death grew out of the root of sin; the apostle saith, *Rom. v. 12. By sin came death.* See then how cursed a thing sin is, that hath brought so many curses upon the creation. If we will not hate sin for its deformity, let us hate it for the curse it brings.

4. Did God make this glorious world? Did he make every thing good? Was there in the creature so much beauty and sweetness? Oh! then what sweetness is there in God? *Quicquid efficit tale, illud est magis tale;* the cause is always more noble than the effect. Think with yourselves, is there so much excellency in house and lands? then how much more is there in God that made these? Is there beauty in a rose? what beauty then is there in Christ the rose of Sharon? Doth oil make the face shine? *Pf. civ. 15.* How will the light of God's countenance make it shine? Doth wine cheer the heart? O what virtue is there in the true vine! how doth the blood of this grape cheer the heart? Is the fruit of the garden sweet? how delicious are the fruits of the Spirit? Is a gold mine so precious? how precious is he who founded this mine? What is Christ, in whom are hid all treasures? *Col. ii. 3.* We should ascend from the creature to the Creator. If there be any comfort here below, how much more is there in God, who made all these things? How unreasonable is it that we should delight in the world, and not much more in him that made it? How should our hearts be set on God, and how should we long to be with God, who hath infinitely more sweetness in him than any creature?

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* 1. Did God create the world? let us wisely observe those works of creation? God hath given us not only the book of the scriptures to read in, but the book of the creation: look up to the heavens, they shew much of God's glory; the sun gilds the world with its bright beams: behold the stars, their regular motion in their orbs, their magnitude, their light, their influence. We may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Look into the sea, and see the wonders of God in the deep, *Pf. cvii. 24.* look into the air, there the birds make melody, and sing forth the praises of their Creator. Look into the earth, there we may wonder at the nature of minerals, the power

power of the loadstone, the virtue of herbs : see the earth decked as a bride with flowers ; all these are the glorious effects of God's power. God hath wrought the creation, as with curious needle-work, that we may observe his wisdom and goodness, and give him the praise due to him, *Pf. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all.*

2. Did God create all things ? Let us obey our Maker. We are his *Jure Creationis*, we owe ourselves to him : if another gives us our maintainance, we think ourselves bound to serve him ; much more should we serve and obey God, who gives us our life, *Acts xvii. 28. In him we live and move.* God hath made every thing for man's service, the corn for nourishment, the beasts for usefulness, the birds for music, that man should be for God's service. The rivers come from the sea, and they run into the sea again. All we have is from God ; let us honour our Creator, and live to him that made us.

3. Did God make our bodies out of the dust, and that dust out of nothing ? Let this keep down pride. When God would humble Adam, he useth this expression, *Out of the dust wast*

*thou taken, Gen. iii. 19.* Why art thou proud, O dust and ashes ? Thou art made but of coarse mettall ; *Cum sis humi limus, cur non humillimus ? Ber. David saith, I was curiously wrought, Pf. cxxxix.* Thy being curiously wrought, may make thee thankful ; but being made of the dust, may keep thee humble. If thou hast beauty, it is but well-coloured earth. Thy body is but air and dust mingled together, and this dust will drop into the dust. When the Lord had said of the judges, they were gods, *Pf. lxxxii. 6.* lest they should grow proud, he tells them, they were dying gods, *v. 7. Ye shall die like men.*

4. Did God create our souls after his image, but we lost it ? let us never leave till we are restored to God's image again. We have now got the devil's image in pride, malice, envy, let us get God's image restored, which consists in knowledge and righteousness, *Col. iii. 10.* grace is our best beauty, it makes us like God and angels : as the sun to the world, so is holiness to the soul. Let us go to God to repair his image in us : Lord ! thou hast once made me, make me anew, sin hath defaced thy image in me, O draw it again by the pencil of the Holy Ghost.

## THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

**G**OD's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

The work of God's providence, *John v. 17. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* The great God hath rested from the works of creation, he doth not create any new species of things, *Gen. ii. 7.* He rested from all his works ; and therefore this scripture must needs be meant of God's works of providence, *My father worketh, and I work. Pf. ciii. 19. His kingdom ruleth over all ; i. e. His providential kingdom.* Now, for the clearing of this point, I shall,

I. Show you that there is a providence. 2. What that providence is. 3. Lay down some maxims or propositions concerning the providence of God.

1<sup>st</sup>, That there is a providence : there is no such thing as blind fate, but, there is a providence that guides and governs in the world, *Prov. xvi. 33. The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*

2<sup>dly</sup>, What this providence is ? I answer, Providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of his will, to his own glory : 1. I call providence God's ordering of things, to distinguish it from his decrees : God's decree ordains things that shall fall out, God's providence ordereth them.

2. I call providence the ordering of things after the counsel of God's will, that I may free it from all rashness and precipitancy, and to shew you that it is an high act of prudence done after the counsel of his own will.

3. God orders all events of things, after the counsel of his will, to his own glory ; the glory of God being the ultimate end of all God's actings, and the centre where all the lines of providence do meet. The providence of God is *regina mundi*, the queen and governess of the world : it is the eye that sees, and the hand that turns all the wheels in the universe. God is not like an artificer that builds a house, and then leaves it, and is gone ; but like a pilot, that does



does, with a great deal of care, steer on the ship of the whole creation.

3dly, Positions about God's providence.

1. God's providence reaches to all places, persons and occurrences: 1. To all places, *Jer. xxiii. 23. Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?* The diocese where providence visits is very large; it reaches to heaven, to earth, and sea, *Pf. cvii. 23, 24. They that go down to the sea, see the wonders of God in the deep.* Now, that the sea, which is higher than the earth, should not drown the earth, is a wonder of providence: and the prophet *Jonah*, he saw the wonders of God in the deep, when the very fish which did devour him and swallow him, did bring him safe to shore. 2. God's providence reaches to all persons, especially the persons of the godly, they are in a special manner taken notice of; God takes care of every saint in particular, as if he had none else to take care for, *1 Pet. v. 7. He careth for you*, i. e. Elect in a special manner. *Pf. xxxiii. 18, 19. The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; to preserve them from death, and to keep them alive in famine.* God, by his providential care, shields off dangers from his people, he sets a life-guard of angels about them, *Pf. xxxiv. 7.* God's providence keeps the very bones of the saints, *Pf. xxxiv. 10.* It bottles their tears, *Pf. lvi. 8.* It strengthens the saints in their weaknesses, *Heb. xi. 34.* It supplies all their wants out of its alms-basket, *Pf. xxiii. 5.* Thus providence doth wonderfully supply the wants of the elect. When the protestants in *Rochell* were besieged by the *French* king, God, by his providence, sent in a great number of small fishes that fed them, such as were never seen before in that haven. So the raven, that unnatural creature (that will hardly feed its own young, yet) providentially brought sustenance to the prophet *Elijah*, *1 Kings xvii. 6.* The virgin *Mary*, tho' by bearing and bringing forth the *Messiah*, she helped to make the world rich, yet she herself was very poor; and now, being warned of the angel to go into *Egypt*, *Mat. ii. 13.* the virgin hath scarce enough to bear her charges thither: see now how God provides for her before-hand; he, by his providence, sends the wise-men from the east, and they bring costly gifts, gold, myrrh, and frankincense, and present these to Christ: and now the virgin had enough to defray her charges unto *Egypt*. God's children sometimes scarce know how they are fed, and yet providence

feeds them, *Pf. xxxvii. 3. Verily thou shalt be fed.* If God will give his people a kingdom when they die, he will not deny them daily bread while they live. 3. God's providence reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; there is nothing that stirs in the world, but God hath, by his providence, the overruling of it. The raising of a man to honour, whence is this, but through divine providence? *Pf. lxxv. 7. He puts down one, and raises up another.* Success and victory in battle, is the result of providence; *Saul* had the victory, but God wrought the salvation, *1 Sam. xi. 13.* That among all virgins that were brought before the king, that *Esther* should find favour in the eyes of the king, was not without God's special providence; for, by this means, the Lord saved the *Jews* alive that were destined to destruction. Providence reaches to the least of things, to the birds and pismire: providence feeds the young raven, when the dam forsakes it, and will give it no food, *Pf. cxlvii. 9.* Providence reaches to the very hairs of our head, *Mat. x. 30. The hairs of your head are all numbered*; and surely if providence reaches to our hairs, then much more to our souls. And thus you have seen, that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, to all occurrences and affairs. Now there are two objections against this doctrine.

*Obj. 1.* But some may say, There are many things done in the world which are excentrical, they are very disorderly and irregular; and surely God's providence doth not reach these things.

*Ans.* Yes, these things that seem to us irregular, God makes use of to his own glory. For instance: suppose you were in a smith's shop, and there should see several sorts of tools, some crooked, some bowed others hooked, would, you condemn all these things for nought, because they do not look handsome? the smith makes use of them all for the doing of his work. Thus it is with the providences of God, they seem to us to be very crooked and strange, yet they all carry on God's work. I shall clear this to you in two particular cases:

1st. God's people are low; why, this seems to be very much out of order, that these that are best, should be in the lowest condition: but there is much wisdom to be seen in this providence, as appears thus: 1. Perhaps the hearts of the godly were lifted up with riches, or with success: now God comes with an humbling providence to afflict them and fleece them; better

is the loss that makes them humble, than the success that makes them proud. Again, 2. If the godly were not sometimes afflicted, and suffered an eclipse in their outward comforts, how could their graces be seen, their faith and patience? If it were always sunshine, we should see no stars; if we should have always prosperity, it would be hard to see the workings of men's faith. Thus you see God's providences are wise and regular, though to us they seem very strange and crooked.

2dly, Here's another case, the wicked flourish; this seems to be very much out of order; ay, but God, in his providence, sees good sometimes that the worst of men should be exalted; they may do some work to God, though against their will, *Isa. x. 7.* God will be in no man's debt. God makes use of the wicked sometimes to protect and shield his church: he makes use of them to refine and purify his people, *Hab. i. 12.* *Thou hast ordained them for correction.* As if the prophet had said, thou hast ordained the wicked to correct thy children. (And indeed, as *Austin* saith well, *We are beholding to wicked men, who against their wills do us good.*) As the corn is beholden to the sower to thresh off its husks, or as the iron is beholden to the file to brighten it, so the godly are beholden to the wicked, though it be against their will, to brighten and refine their graces. Now, then, if the wicked do God's own work, though against their will, God will not let them be losers by it; he will raise them in the world, exalt them, and wring out the waters of a full cup to them. Thus you see these providences are wise and regular, which to us seem strange and crooked.

*Obj. 2.* But may some say. If God hath a hand in ordering all things that fall out, why then he hath a hand in the sins of men.

I answer, no, by no means, he hath no hand in any man's sin. God cannot go contrary to his own nature, he cannot do any unholy action, no more than the sun can be said to be darkened. Here you must take heed of two things; as you must take heed of making God ignorant of men's sins, so you must take heed of making God to have a hand in men's sins: Is it a thing likely, that God is the author of sin, that is an avenger of it? Is it a likely thing that God should make a law against sin, and then have a hand in breaking his own law: is that likely? And therefore to answer the objection, God in his providence doth permit men's sins, *Acts xiv. 16.* *He suffered all nations to*

*walk in their own ways.* God permitted their sin, and he would never permit their sin, if he could not bring good out of it; as the apothecary can make a treacle of poison. Had not sin been at all permitted, God's justice in punishing sin, and his mercy in pardoning sin, had never been so well known. The Lord is pleased to permit it, but he had no hand in it.

*Obj.* But is it not said, that God hardened *Pharaoh's* heart? Here's more than God's bare permitting of sin.

*Ans.* God doth not infuse evil into men; only he withdraws the influence of his graces, and then the heart hardens of itself; even as the light being withdrawn, darkness presently follows in the air: but it were absurd to say, that therefore the light darkens the air; and therefore you shall observe, that *Pharaoh* is said to harden his own heart, *Exod. viii. 15.* God is the cause of no man's sin; it is true, God hath a hand in the action where sin is, but no hand in the sin of the action. He that plays upon a jarring instrument, he is the cause of the sounding of the instrument, but the jarring is from itself: so it is here, the actions of men, so far as they are natural, are from God; but so far as they are sinful, they are from men themselves, and God has no hand at all in them. And so much for the first position, that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, and to all occurrences.

2. A second position is this, there are providences that are casual and accidental to us that are predetermined by the Lord: the falling of a tile upon one's head, the breaking out of a fire to us, is casual, but it is ordered by a providence of God. You have a clear instance of this, *1 Kings xxii. 34.* *A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness.* This accident was casual as to the man that drew the bow; but it was divinely ordered by the providence of God; God's providence directed the arrow to hit the mark. Things that seem to fall out casual, and by chance, they are the issues of God's decrees, and the interpretation of his will.

3. God's providence is greatly to be observed, but we are not to make it the rule of our actions, *Pf. cvii. 43.* *Whoso is wise will observe these things.* It is good to observe providence, but we must not make it our rule to walk by; providence is a Christian's diurnal, but not his bible. Sometimes a bad cause pre-



vails and gets ground ; it is not to be liked because it doth prevail : we must not think the better of what is sinful, because it is successful ; here is no rule for our actions to be directed by.

4. Divine providence is irresistible, there is no standing in the way of God's providence to hinder it ; when God's time was come for *Joseph's* release, the prison could hold him no longer, *The king sent and loosed him*, Ps. cv. 20. When God would indulge the *Jews* with liberty in their religion, *Cyrus* by a providence, puts forth a proclamation to encourage the *Jews* to go and build their temple at *Jerusalem*, and worship God, *Ezra* i. 2, 3. If God will shield and protect *Jeremiah's* person in captivity, the very king of *Babylon* shall nurse the prophet, give charge concerning him that he want nothing, *Jer.* xxxix. 11, 12.

5. God is to be trusted when his providences seem to run contrary to his promises. God promised *David* to give him the crown, to make him king ; but providence runs contrary to his promise : *David* was pursued by *Saul*, was in danger of his life ; but all this while it was *David's* duty to trust God. Pray observe, the Lord doth oftentimes by cross providence, bring to pass his promise. God promised *Paul* the lives of all that were with him in the ship ; but now the providence of God seems to run quite contrary to his promise, the winds blew, the ship splits and breaks in pieces ; and thus God fulfilled his promise ; upon the broken pieces of the ship, they all came safe to shore. Trust God when providences seem to run quite contrary to promises.

6. The providences of God are chequer-work, they are intermingled ; in the life to come there shall be no more mixture ; in hell there is nothing but bitter ; in heaven there is nothing but sweet : but in this life the providences of God are mixed, there is something of the sweet in them, and something of the bitter. Providences are just like *Israel's* pillar of cloud, that conducted them in their march ; it was dark on one side, and light on the other : so the providences of God are a dark part and a light part. In the ark there was laid up the rod and manna, so are God's providences to his children ; there is something of the rod, and something of the manna ; so that we may say with *David*, *I will sing of mercy and judgment*. *Joseph* was in prison, there was the dark side of the cloud ; but God was with *Joseph*, there was the light side of the cloud. *Asher's* shoes were of brass, but

his feet were dipt in oil, *Deut.* xxxiii. 24. So affliction is the shoe of brass that pinches ; ay, but there is mercy mingled with affliction, there's the foot dipt in oil.

7. The very same action, as it comes from God's providence, may be good, which, as it comes from men, may be evil. For instance, *Joseph* being sold into *Egypt*, as he was sold by his brethren, it was evil, very wicked, for it was the fruit of their envy ; but as it was an act of God's providence, so it was good ; for by this means *Jacob* and all his family were preserved alive in *Egypt*. Another instance is in *Shimei's* cursing *David* : now, as *Shimei* cursed *David*, it was wicked and sinful, for it was the fruit of his malice ; but as his cursing was ordered by God's providence, so it was an act of God's justice to punish *David*, and to humble him for his adultery and murder. The crucifying of Christ, as it came from the *Jews*, it is an act of hatred and malice to Christ : so *Judas's* betraying him was an act of covetousness ; but as it was an act of God's providence, so there was good in it ; for, see, it was an act of God's love in giving Christ to die for the world. Thus I have cleared to you the doctrine of God's providence, in these several positions : let me now speak something by way of application.

Use 1. By way of exhortation in these particulars. (1.) Admire God's providence : the providence of God keeps the whole creation upon the wheels, or else it would soon be dissolved, and the very axle-tree would break in pieces : if God's providence should be withdrawn but for a while, creatures would be dissolved, and run into their first nothing. Without this wise providence of God, there would be disorder and confusion in the whole world, just like an army when it is routed and scattered. The providence of God infuses comfort and virtue into every thing we enjoy ; our cloaths would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, without the special providence of God. And doth not all this deserve your admiration of providence ?

(2.) Learn quietly to submit to divine providence ; do not murmur at things that are ordered by divine wisdom. We may no more find fault with the works of providence, than we may with the works of creation : It is a sin as well to quarrel with God's providence, as to deny God's providence. If men do not act as we would have them, they shall act as God would have them. His providence it is his master-wheel that turns these lesser wheels, and God will bring

bring his glory out of all at last: *Pf. xxxix. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because, thou, Lord, didst it.* It may be, we think sometimes we could order things better if we had the government of the world in our hands; but, alas! should we be left to our own choice, we should choose those things that are hurtful for us. *David* did earnestly desire the life of his child, which was the fruit of his sin; now, had the child lived, it had been a perpetual monument of his shame. Let us be content God should rule the world, learn to acquiesce in his will, and submit to his providence: doth any affliction befall you? Remember God sees it is that which is fit for you, or it should not come; your cloaths cannot be so fit for you, as your crosses. God's providences may sometimes be secret, but it is always wise; though we may not be silent under God's dishonour, yet we should learn to be silent under his displeasure.

(3.) You that are Christians, believe that all God's providences shall conspire for the good of his people, and shall promote their salvation at last. The providences of God are sometimes dark, and our eyes dim, and we can hardly tell what to make of them; but when we cannot unriddle providence, believe it shall work together for the good of the elect, *Rom. viii. 28.* The wheels in a watch seem to move cross one to another, but they help forward the motion of the watch, and make the larum strike: so the providences of God seem to be cross wheels; but, for all that, they shall carry on the good of the elect. The pricking of a vein is in itself evil and hurtful; but as it prevents a fever, and tends to the health of the patient, so it is good: so affliction in itself is not joyous, but grievous; but the Lord turns this to the good of his saints. Poverty shall starve their sins, affliction shall prepare them for a kingdom. Therefore, Christians, believe that God loves us, that he will make the most cross providences to promote his glory and our good.

(4.) Let this be an antidote against immoderate fear; for nothing comes to pass but what is ordained by God's decree, and ordered by his providence. We sometimes fear what the issue of things will be; men grow high in their affings: let us not make things worse by our fear. Men are limited in their power, and shall not go one hairs-breadth further than God's providence will permit: he might let *Senacherib's* army march towards *Jerusalem*, but he shall not shoot one arrow against it, *Isa. xxxviii.*

36. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand. When *Israel* was compassed in between *Pharaoh* and the red-sea, no question some of their hearts did begin to tremble, and they looked upon themselves as dead men; but providence so ordered it, that the sea was a safe passage to *Israel*, and a sepulchre to *Pharaoh* and all his host.

Use 2. Comfort in respect of the church of God: God's providence reacheth in a more special manner to his church, *Isa. xxvii. 2. Sing ye unto her a vineyard of red wine.* God waters this vineyard with his blessings, and watcheth over it by his providence, *I the Lord keep it night and day.* Such as think totally to ruin the church, must do it in a time when it is neither day nor night; for the Lord keeps it by his providence night and day. What a miraculous conduct of providence had *Israel*! God led them by a pillar of fire, gave them manna from heaven, set the rock abroach. God by his providence preserves his church in the midst of enemies; which is as to see a spark kept alive in the ocean, or a flock of sheep among wolves. God saves his church strangely; 1. By giving unexpected mercies to his church, when she looked for nothing but ruin, *Pf. cxxvi. 1. When the Lord turned the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream.* How strangely did God raise up queen *Esther* to preserve alive the Jews, when *Haman* had got a bloody warrant signed for their execution? 2. Strangely by saving in that very way in which we think he will destroy: God works sometimes by contraries. He raiseth his church, by bringing it low. The blood of the martyrs hath watered the church, and made it more fruitful, *Exod. i. 12.* The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied: the church is like that plant *Gregory Nazianzen* speaks of, it lives by dying, and grows by cutting. 3. Strangely in that he makes the enemy to do his work: when the people of *Ammon*, and *Moab*, and mount *Seir* came against *Judah*, God set the enemy one against another, *2 Chron. xx. 23. The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against them of mount Seir to slay them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.* In the powder-treason he made the traitors to be their own betrayers: God can do his work by the enemy's hand. God made the Egyptians send away the people of *Israel* laden with jewels, *Exod. xii. 36.* The church



is the apple of God's eye, and the eye-lid of his providence doth daily cover and defend it.

5. Let the merciful providence of God cause thankfulness: we are kept alive by a wonder-working providence. Providence makes our cloaths warm us, our meat nourish us. We are fed every day out of the alms-basket of God's providence. That in health; that we have an estate; it is not our diligence, but God's providence, *Deut. viii. 18. Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for he it is that gives thee power to get wealth.* Especially if we go a step higher, we may see cause of thankfulness: that we should be born and bred in a gospel-climate; that we should live in such a place where the sun of righteousness shines; this is a signal providence: why might we not have been born in such places where Paganism prevails? That Christ should make himself known to us, and touch our hearts with his spirit, when he pas-

seth by others: whence is this, but from the miraculous providence of God, which is the effect of his free grace?

*Use 3.* See here, that which may make us long for that time when the great mystery of God's providence shall be fully unfolded to us. Now we scarce know what to make of God's providence, therefore are ready to censure what we do not understand; but in heaven we shall see how all God's providences (sickness, losses, sufferings) carried on our salvation. Here we see but some dark pieces of God's providence, and it is impossible to judge of God's works by pieces; but when we come to heaven, and see the full body and pourtraiture of God's providence drawn out into its lively colours, it will be a glorious sight to behold: then we shall see how all God's providences helped to fulfill his promises. Never a providence but we shall see had either a wonder or a mercy in it.



## THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

**Q. IX.** I PROCEED to the next question, *What special providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*

*Ans.* When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge, upon pain of death.

For this, consult with *Gen. ii. 16, 17. And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die.* The subject then of our next discourse is, the covenant of works. This covenant was made with Adam and all mankind; for Adam was a public person, and the representative of the world.

*Qu.* For what reason did God make a covenant with Adam and his posterity in innocency?

*Ans.* To shew his sovereignty over us; we were his creatures, and as God was the great monarch of heaven and earth, God might impose upon us terms of a covenant. 2. God made a covenant with Adam, to bind him fast to God: as God bound himself to Adam, so Adam was bound to God by the covenant.

*Qu.* What was the covenant?

*Ans.* 1. God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge; God gave Adam leave to eat of all the other trees of the garden. God did not envy him any happiness; only meddle not with this tree of knowledge, because God would try Adam's obedience. As king Pharaoh made Joseph chief ruler of his kingdom, and gave him a ring off his finger, and a chain of gold only he must not touch his throne, *Gen. lxi. 40.* In like manner God dealt with Adam, he gave him a sparkling jewel, knowledge; and arrayed him with a fine vesture, put upon him the garment of original righteousness; only, saith God, touch not the tree of knowledge, for that is aspiring after omniscience. Adam had power to have kept this law; Adam had the copy of God's law written in his heart. This covenant of works had a promise annexed to it, and a threatening. 1. The promise, *Do this and live.* In case man had stood, it is probable he had not died, but had been translated to a better paradise. 2. The threatening, *Thou shalt die the death;* Heb. *In dying thou shalt die;* that is, thou shalt die both a natural death, and an eternal, unless some other expedient be found out for thy restoration.

*Qu.* But why did God give Adam this law,

seeing God did foresee that Adam would transgress it?

*Ans.* 1. It was Adam's fault that he did not keep the law; God gave him a stock of grace to trade with, but he of himself broke. 2. Though God foresaw Adam would transgress, yet that was not a sufficient reason that Adam should have no law given him: for, by the same reason, God should not have given his written word to men, to be a rule of faith and manners, because he foresaw that some would not believe, and others would be prophane. Shall not laws be made in the land, because some break them? 3. God, though he foresaw Adam would break the law, he knew how to turn it to a greater good, in sending Christ. The first covenant being broken, he knew how to establish a second, and a better. Well, concerning the first covenant, consider these four things.

1. The form of the first covenant, in innocence, was working; *do this and live*. Working was the ground and condition of our justification, *Gal. iii. 12*. Not but that working is required in the covenant of grace: we are bid to work out salvation, and be rich in good works. But works in the covenant of grace are not required under the same notion, as in the first covenant with Adam. Works are not required to the justification of our persons, but as a testimony of our love to God; not as a cause of our salvation, but as an evidence of our adoption. Works are required in the covenant of grace, not so much in our own strength, as in the strength of another: *It is God which worketh in you, Phil. ii. 13*. As the scrivener guides the child's hand, and helps him to form his letters, so that it is not so much the child's writing, as the scrivener's that guides his hand; so not our working as the spirit's co-working.

2. The covenant of works was very strict. God required of Adam and all mankind, 1. Perfect obedience. Adam must do all things written in the *Book of the law, Gal. iii. 10*. and not fail, either in the matter or manner. Adam was to live up to the whole breadth of the moral law, and go exactly according to it, as a well-made dial goes with the sun; a sinful thought had forfeited the covenant. 2. Personal obedience: Adam must not do his work by a proxy, or have any surety bound for him; no, it must be done in his own person. 3. Perpetual obedience: he must continue in all things written in the book of the law. *Gal. iii. 10*. Thus it

was very strict. There was no mercy in case of failure.

3. The covenant of works was not built upon a very firm basis: therefore it must needs leave men full of fears and doubts. The covenant of works rested upon the strength of men's inherent righteousness; which though in innocency was perfect, yet was subject to a change. Adam was created holy, but mutable: he had a power to stand, but not a power not to fall. Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with, but he was not sure he would not break. Adam was his own pilot, and could steer right in the time of innocency; but he was not so secured, but that he might dash against the rock of a temptation, and he and his posterity suffer shipwreck, so that the covenant of works must needs leave jealousies and doubtings in Adam's heart, he having no security given him, that he should not fall from that glorious state.

4. The covenant of works being broken by sin; man's condition was very deplorable and desperate. He was left in himself helpless; there was no place for repentance; the justice of God being offended, sets all the other attributes against mankind. When Adam lost his righteousness, he lost his anchor of hope, and his crown: there was no way for man's relief, unless God would find out such a way, that neither man nor angel could devise.

*Use 1.* See the condescension of God, who was pleased to stoop so low, as to make a covenant with us. For the God of glory to make a covenant with dust and ashes; for God to bind himself to us, to give us life in case of obedience: entering into a covenant was a sign of God's friendship with us, and a royal act of his favour.

2. See what a glorious condition man was in, when God entered into covenant with him, 1. He was placed in the garden of God, which for the pleasure of it was called paradise, *Gen. ii. 28*. He had his choice of all the trees (one only excepted) he had all kind of precious stones, pure mettals, rich cedars; he was a king upon the throne, and all the creation did obeisance to him, as in Joseph's dream, all his brethren's sheaves did bow to his sheaf. Man, in innocency, had all kind of pleasure that might ravish his senses with delight, and be as baits to allure him to serve and worship his maker. 2. Besides, he was full of holiness; paradise was not more adorned with fruit, than

Adam's



*Adam's* soul was with grace. He was the coin on which God had stamped his lively image; light sparkled in his understanding, he was like an earthly angel; his will and affections were full of order, tuning harmoniously to the will of God. *Adam* was a perfect pattern of sanctity. 3. *Adam* had intimacy of communion with God, and conversed with him, as a favourite with his prince. *Adam* knew God's mind, and had his heart: he not only enjoyed the light of the sun in paradise, but the light of God's countenance. This condition was *Adam* in, when God entered into a covenant with him: but this did not long continue: *man being in honour abideth not*, Pf. xlix. ult. lodged not for a night; his teeth watered at the apple, and ever since it hath made our eyes water:

3. Learn, from *Adam's* fall, how unable we are to stand in our own strength. If *Adam*, in the state of integrity, did not stand, how unable are we now, when the lock of our original righteousness is cut? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? We need more strength to uphold us than our own.

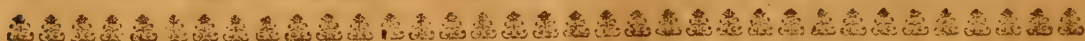
4. See in what a sad condition all unbelievers and unpenitent persons are; so long as they continue in their sins, they continue under the curse of the first covenant. Faith intitles us to the mercy of the second covenant: but, while men are under the power of their sins, they are under the curse of the first covenant; and if they die in this condition, they are damned to eternity.

5. See the wonderful goodness of God, who was pleased, when we had forfeited the first covenant, to enter into a new covenant with us. Well may it be called *fœdus gratiæ*, a covenant of grace; it is bespangled with promises, as the heaven with stars. When the angels those glo-

rious spirits fell, God did not enter into a new covenant with them to be their God, but let those golden vessels ly broken; but hath entered into a second covenant with us, better than the first, *Heb.* viii. 6. It is better, because it is surer; it is made in Christ, and cannot be reversed; Christ hath engaged his strength to keep every believer. In the first covenant we have a *posse stare*, a power of standing: in the second we have a *non posse cadere*, an impossibility of falling finally, *1 Pet.* i. 5.

6. Whosoever they are that look for righteousness and salvation by the power of their free-will, or the inherent goodness of their nature, or by virtue of their merit, as the *Soci-nians* and papists, these are all under the covenant of works: they do not submit to the righteousness of faith, therefore they are bound to keep the whole law, and in case of failure, they are condemned. The covenant of grace, is like a court of chancery, to relieve the sinner, and help him who is cast by the first covenant: it faith, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and be saved; but such as will stand upon their own inherent righteousness, free-will and merit, they fall under the first covenant of works, and are in a perishing estate.

*Use 2.* Let us labour by faith to get into the second covenant of grace, and then the curse of the first covenant is taken away by Christ. If we once get to be heirs of the covenant of grace, we are in a better state than before. *Adam* stood on his own legs, therefore fell; we stand in the strength of Christ: under the first covenant, the justice of God, as an avenger of blood, pursues you; but if ye get into the second covenant, you are got into the city of refuge, you are safe, and the justice of God is pacified towards you.



## CONCERNING SIN.

Qu. X. *WHAT* is sin?

*Ans.* Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

1 JOHN iii. 4. *Sin is a transgression of the law.* Of sin in general.

1. Sin is a violation or transgression: the Latin word, *transgredior*, to transgress, signifies to go beyond one's bounds: the moral law is

to keep us within the bounds of our duty; sin is a going beyond our bounds.

2. The law of God; it is not the law of an inferior prince that is broken, but of *Jehovah*, who gives laws as well to angels as men; it is a law that is *just*, and *holy*, and *good*, *Rom.* vii. 12. It is *just*, there is nothing in it unequal; *holy*, nothing in it impure; *good*, nothing in it prejudicial.

prejudicial. So that there is no reason to break this law, no more than for a beast that is in a fat pasture, to break over the hedge, to leap into a barren heath or quagmire.

I shall shew what an hainous and execrable thing sin is. It is *malorum colluvies*, the complication of all evil; it is the spirits of mischief distill'd: the Scripture calls it *the accursed thing*, Josh. vii. 13. it is compared to the venom of serpents, the stench of sepulchres. The apostle useth this expression of sin, *Out of measure sinful*, Rom. vii. 13. or, as it is in the the Greek, *hyperbolically sinful*. The devil would paint over sin with the vermilion-colour of pleasure and profit, that he may make it look fair: but I shall pull off the paint from sin, that you may see the ugly face of it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and to say of it, as Lot of Zoar, Gen. xix. 20. *Is it not a little one?* But that you may see how great an evil sin is, consider these four things.

I. The original of sin, whence it comes: it fetcheth its pedigree from hell; Sin is of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. *He that committeth sin is of the devil*: Satan was the first actor of sin, and the first tempter to sin: Sin is the devil's first-born.

II. Sin is evil in the nature of it.

1. It is a defiling thing. Sin is not only a defilement, but a pollution. It is to the soul as rust is to gold, as a stain is to beauty. It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. Sin in scripture is compared to a *menstruous cloth*, Isa. xxx. 22. to a *plague-sore*, 1 Kings viii. 38. Joshua's filthy garments, in which he stood before the angel, Zech. iii. 3. were nothing but a type and hieroglyphic of sin. Sin hath blotted God's image, and stained the orient brightness of the soul. Sin makes God lothe a sinner, Zech. xi. 8. and when a sinner sees his sin, he lothes himself, Ezek. xx. 42. Sin drops poison on our holy things, it infects our prayers. The high priest was to make atonement for sin on the altar, Exod. xxix. 36. to typify that our holiest services need Christ to make an atonement for them. Duties of religion in themselves are good, but sin corrupts them, as the purest water is polluted, running through muddy ground. The leper under the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had defiled the altar. The apostle calls sin, *Filthiness of flesh and spirit*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Sin stamps the devil's image on a man: malice is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his

cloven foot. It turns a man into a devil, John vi. 70. *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil.*

2. Sin is a grieving of God's Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God*. To grieve, is more than to anger.

Qu. *How can the Spirit be said to be grieved?* For, seeing he is God, he cannot be subject to any passion.

Ans. This is spoken metaphorically; Sin is said to grieve the Spirit, because it is an injury offered to the Spirit, and he takes it unkindly, and, as it were, lays it to heart. And, is it not much thus to grieve the Spirit? The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove; sin makes this blessed dove mourn. Were it only an angel, we should not grieve him, much less the Spirit of God: Is it not sad to grieve our Comforter.

3. Sin is an act of contumacy against God; a walking antipodes to heaven, Lev. xxvi. 27. *If ye will walk contrary to me*. A sinner tramples upon God's law, crosseth his will, doth all he can to affront, yea, to spite God. The Hebrew word for sin, *Pashang*, signifies rebellion; there is the heart of a rebel in every sin, Jer. xlv. 16. *We will do whatsoever proceedeth out of our mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven*. Sin strikes at the very Deity; *Pecatum est deicidium*: Sin would not only unthrone God, but ungod him. If the sinner could help it, God should no longer be God.

4. Sin is an act of disingenuity and unkindness: God feeds the sinner, keeps off evils from him, bemiracles him with mercy; but the sinner not only forgets God's mercies, but abuseth them: he is the worse for mercy; like *Abulom*, who, as soon as *David* had kissed him, and took him into favour, plotted treason against him, 2 Sam. xv. 10. Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk, *was pertusum*, 2 Sam. xvi. 17. Is this thy kindness to thy Friend? God may upbraid the sinner: I have given thee (may God say) thy health, strength, and estate; thou requitest me evil for good, thou woundest me with my own mercies; is this thy kindness to thy Friend? Did I give thee life to sin? Did I give thee wages to serve the devil?

5. Sin is a disease, Isa. i. 5. *The whole head is sick*; some are sick of pride, others of lust, others of envy. Sin hath distempered the intellectual part, 'tis a leprosy in the head, it hath poisoned the vitals, Tit. ii. 16. *Their conscience is defiled*. It is with a sinner as with a sick patient, his pa-  
late



late is distempered, the sweetest things taste bitter to him. The word which is *sweeter than the honey-comb*, tastes bitter to him, *Isa. v. 20.* they put sweet for bitter. This is a disease, and nothing can cure this disease but the blood of the physician.

6. Sin is an irrational thing; it makes a man act not only wickedly but foolishly. It is absurd and irrational to prefer the lesser before the greater, the pleasures of life, before the rivers of pleasures at God's right-hand for evermore. Is it not irrational to lose heaven, for the satisfying or indulging of lust? As *Lyfimachus*, who, for a draught of water, lost a kingdom. Is it not irrational to gratify an enemy? In sin we do so. When lust or rash anger burn in the soul, Satan, warms himself at that fire. Men's sins feast the Devil.

7. Sin is a painful thing; it costs men much labour in pursuing their sins. How do men tire themselves in doing the devil's drudgery? *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity.* What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason? He goes to the high priest, and then after to the band of soldiers, and then back again to the garden. *St. Chrysostom* saith, *Virtue is easier than vice.* 'Tis more pains to some to follow their sins, than to others to worship their God. While the sinner travels with his sin, in sorrow he brings forth; it is called *serving divers lusts*, *Tit. iii. 2.* Not enjoy, but serve: Why so? because not only of the slavery in sin, but the hard labour; it is *serving divers lusts*. Many a man goes to hell in the sweat of his brows.

8. Sin is the only thing God hath an antipathy against: God doth not hate a man because he is poor, or despised in the world; you do not hate your friend because he is sick, but that which draws forth the keenness of God's hatred, is sin, *Jer. xlv. 4. O do not this abominable thing which I hate.* And sure, if the sinner dies under God's hatred, he cannot be admitted into the celestial mansions: will God let him live with him whom he hates? God will never lay a viper in his bosom. The feathers of the eagle will not mix with the feathers of other fowls; God will not mix and incorporate with a sinner. Till sin be removed, there is no coming where God is.

III. See the evil of sin, in the price paid for it; it cost the blood of God to expiate it. *O man* (saith *St. Austin*) *consider the greatness of thy sin, by the greatness of the price paid for sin.*

All the princes on earth, or angels in heaven, could not satisfy for sin; only Christ. Nay, Christ's *active obedience* was not enough to make atonement for sin, but he must suffer upon the cross; for, *without blood is no remission*, *Heb. ix. 22.* O what an accursed thing is sin, that Christ should die for it! The evil of sin is not so much seen in that one thousand are damned for it, as that Christ died for it.

IV. Sin is evil in the *Effects* of it.

I. Sin hath *degraded us* of our honour. *Reuben* by incest lost his dignity; and tho' he were the first-born, he could not *excel*, *Gen. xlix. 4.* God made us in his own image, a little lower than the angels; but sin hath debased us. Before *Adam* sinned, he was like an herald that hath his *coat of arms* upon him; all reverence him, because he carries the king's coat of arms; but let the coat be pulled off, and he is despised, no man regards him. Sin hath done this, it hath plucked off our coat of innocency, and now it hath debased us, and turned our glory into shame, *Dan. xi. 21. And there shall stand up a vile person.* This was spoken of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, who was a king, and his name signifies *illustrious*; yet sin had degraded him, he was a vile person.

2. Sin *disquiets* the peace of the soul; whatever *defiles, disturbs*; as poison which tortures the bowels, corrupts the blood, so sin doth the soul, *Isa. lvii. 21.* Sin breeds a *trembling* at the heart; it creates fears, and there is *torment in fear*, *1 John iv. 18.* Sin makes sad convulsions in the conscience. *Judas* was so terrified with guilt and horror, that he hangs himself to quiet his conscience. And is he not like to be well cured, that throws himself into hell for ease?

3. Sin produceth all temporal evil, *Lam. i. 8. Jerusalem* hath grievously sinned, therefore, she is removed. It is the *Trojan horse*, it hath sword and famine, and pestilence in the belly of it. Sin is a coal, that not only blacks, but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries relations. Sin shoots the flying roll of God's curses into a family and kingdom, *Zeck. v. 4.* It is reported of *Phocas*, having built a wall of mighty strength about his city, there was a voice heard, *Sin is within the city, and that will throw down the wall.*

4. Sin *unrepented of* brings final damnation. The canker that breeds in the rose is the cause of its perishing; and corruptions that breed in men's

mens souls are the cause of their damning. *Sin*, without repentance, brings the *second death*, Rev. xx. 14. that is, *mors sine morte*, Bern. a death always dying. *Sin's* pleasure will turn to sorrow at last; like the book the prophet did eat, *Ezek.* iii. 3. sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. *Sin* brings the wrath of God, and what buckets or engines can quench that fire; *Mat.* vi. 44. *Where the worm never dies, and the fire is not quenched.*

*Use 1.* See how deadly an evil *Sin* is, how strange is it that any one should love it? *Pf.* iv. 3. *How long will ye love vanity?* *Hos.* iii. 1. *Who look to other gods and love fagons of wine.* *Sin* is a dish men cannot forbear, tho' it make them sick; who would pour rose-water into a kennel? What pity is it so sweet an affection as love should be poured upon so filthy a thing as *Sin*? *Sin* brings a sting in the conscience, a curse in the estate; yet men love it. A sinner is the greatest self-denier; for his *Sin* he will deny himself a part in heaven.

*Use 2.* Do any thing rather than sin. O hate *Sin*! there is more evil in the least *Sin*, than in the greatest bodily evils that can befall us. The *Ermyn* rather chooseth to die, than defile her beautiful skin. There is more evil in a drop of *Sin*, than in a sea of affliction: affliction is but like a rent in a coat, *Sin* a prick at the

heart. In affliction there is *aliquid boni*, some good; in this lion there is some honey to be found, *Pf.* cxix. 71. *It is good for me that I was afflicted.* *Utile est anima si in hac area mundi flagellis trituretur corpus*, Aug. Affliction is God's syel to thresh off our husks; not to consume, but refine. There is no good in *Sin*; it is the spirit and quintessence of evil. *Sin* is worse than hell; for the pains of hell only are a burden to the creature; but sin is a burden to God, *Amos* ii. 13. *I am pressed under your iniquities, as a cart is pressed under the sheaves.*

*Use ult.* Is *Sin* so great an evil? Then how thankful should you be to God, if he hath taken away your *Sin*? *Zech.* iii. 3. *I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee.* If you had a disease on your body, plague or dropsy, how thankful would you be to have it taken away? Much more to have *Sin* taken away. God takes away the guilt of *Sin* by pardoning grace, and the power of *Sin* by mortifying grace. O be thankful that this sickness is *not unto death*; that God hath changed your nature, and by grafting you into Christ, made you partake of the sweetness of that olive; that *Sin*, tho' it live, doth not reign, but the elder serves the younger, the elder of sin serves the younger of grace.

A D A M ' S   S I N .

Q. XI. **W**HAT was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created.

*Ans.* The sin was their eating the forbidden fruit.

*Gen.* iii. 6.-----*She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband.*

Here is implied, 1. That our first parents fell from their estate of innocency. 2. The sin by which they fell, eating the forbidden fruit.

(1.) Our first parents fell from their glorious state of innocency. *Eccl.* vii. 29. *Cod made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* Adam was perfectly holy, he had rectitude of mind, and liberty of will to good; but his head aked till he had invented his own and our death, he sought out many inventions. 1. Adam's fall was voluntary; he had a *posse non*

*peccare*, a power not to fall. Free-will was a sufficient shield to repel temptation: The devil could not have forced him, unless he had given his consent; satan was only a suiter to woo, not a king to compel: but Adam gave away his own power, and suffered himself to be decoyed into sin: like a young gallant, who, at one throw, loseth a fair lordship. Adam had a fair lordship, he was lord of the world, *Gen.* i. 28. *Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth.* But he lost all at one throw. As soon as he had sinned, he forfeited paradise. 2. Adam's fall was sudden, he did not long continue in his royal majesty.

*Qu.* How long did Adam continue in paradise before he fell?

*Ans.* *Testatus* saith, he fell the next day, *Pe-*  
*rerius*



*serius* faith, he fell the eighth day after his creation. But the most probable opinion is, That *Adam* fell the very same day in which he was created: So *Irenæus*, *Cyril*, *Epiphanius*, and many others. The reasons which incline me to believe so, are,

1. It is said, Satan was a murderer *from the beginning*, John viii. 44. Now, whom did he murder? Not the blessed angels, he could not reach them; nor the cursed angels, for they had before destroyed themselves. How then was Satan a murderer from the beginning? As soon as Satan fell, he began to tempt mankind to sin; this was a murdering temptation. By which it appears *Adam* did not stay long in paradise; soon after his creation the devil set upon him, and murdered him by his temptation.

2. Argument to prove that *Adam* fell the same day he was created: *Adam* had not yet eaten of the tree of life, v. 22, 23. *And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat; the Lord sent him forth of the garden.* This tree of life, being one of the choicest fruits in the garden, and being placed in the midst of paradise, it is very like *Adam* would have eaten of this tree of life one of the first, had not the serpent beguiled him with the tree of knowledge. So that hence I conclude, *Adam* fell the very day of his creation, because he had not yet tasted the tree of life, that tree that was most in his eye, and had such delicious fruit growing upon it.

3. Argument from *Pf.* xlix. 12. *Man being in honour abideth not.* The Rabbins read it thus, *Adam being in honour, lodged not one night.* The Hebrew word for *abide*, signifies, "To stay or lodge all night." *Adam* then it seems did not take up one night's lodging in Paradise.

1. *Inference.* From *Adam's* sudden fall, he fell the same day in which he was created, learn, 1. The weakness of human nature: *Adam*, in a state of integrity, quickly made a defection from God; he soon lost the robe of innocence, and the glory of Paradise. And, was our nature thus weak when it was at the best? What is it now when it is at the worst? If *Adam* did not stand when he was perfectly righteous, how unable are we to stand, when sin hath cut the lock of our original righteousness? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? If *Adam*, in a few hours, sinned himself out of Paradise, O how quickly should we sin ourselves into hell, if we were not kept by a greater power than our own! but God

puts underneath his everlasting arms, *Deut.* xxxii. 27.

2. From *Adam's* sudden fall, he fell the same day; learn how sad it is for a man to be left to himself. 1. *Adam* being left to himself, fell; O then, what will become of us, how soon fall, if God leave us to ourselves? A man left to himself will choose his own death; he will be a prey to every temptation. A man without God's grace, left to himself, is like a ship in a storm without pilot or anchor, and is ready to dash upon every rock. Make this prayer to God, *Lord, do not leave me to myself: If Adam fell so soon who had strength, how soon shall I fall who have no strength?* O urge God with his hand and seal, 2 *Cor.* xii. 9. *My strength shall be made perfect in weakness.*

(2.) The sin by which our first parents fell, was, *eating the forbidden fruit*; where consider two things: 1. The occasion of it. 1. The sin itself.

1. The occasion of it; the serpent's temptation; the devil did creep into the serpent, and spake in the serpent, as the angel in *Balaam's* ass; where consider, 1. The subtilty of Satan's temptation; his wiles are worse than his darts. Satan's subtilty in tempting; 1. He deals all along as an impostor, he usher'd in his temptation by a lie: he heaps up many lies, 1<sup>st</sup>, That tho' our first parents did eat of that tree, they should not die, *Gen.* iii. 4. *Ye shall not surely die.* 2<sup>d</sup> Lie, That God did envy our first parents their happiness, v. 5. *God knows, that in the day ye eat, your eyes shall be opened*; q. d. It is God's envying your felicity, that he forbids you this tree. 3<sup>d</sup> Lie, That they should be thereby made like unto God, v. 5. *Ye shall be as gods.* Here was his subtilty in tempting: The devil was first a liar, then a murderer.

(2.) In that he set upon our first parents so quickly, before they were confirmed in their obedience; the angels in heaven are fully confirmed in holiness; they are called stars of the morning, *Job* xxxviii. 7. and they are fixed stars. But our first parents were not confirmed in their obedience, they were not fixed in their orb of holiness: tho' they had a possibility of standing, they had not an impossibility of falling; they were holy, but mutable; here was Satan's subtilty, in tempting our first parents before they were confirmed in their obedience.

(3.) His subtilty in tempting was, That he sets upon *Eve* first; 1. Because he thought she was less able to resist. Satan did break over the hedge

hedge, where it was weakest; he knew he could more easily insinuate and wind himself into her by a temptation. An expert soldier, when he is to storm or enter a castle, observes warily where there is a breach, or how he may enter with more facility; so did Satan the weaker vessel. 2. He tempted *Eve* first, because he knew, if once he could prevail with her, she would easily draw her husband. Thus the devil banded over a temptation to *Job* by his wife, *Job* ii. 9. *Curse God and die.* *Agrippina* poisoned the emperor *Commodus* with wine in a perfume'd cup; the cup being perfume'd and given him by his wife, it was the less suspected. Satan knew a temptation coming to *Adam* from his wife, would be more prevailing, and would be less suspected: O bitter! sometimes relations prove temptations: a wife may be a snare, when she dissuades her husband from doing his duty, or enticeth him to evil. *Ahab* sold himself to work wickedness, whom his wife *Jezebel* stirred up, 1 Kings xxi. 25. She blew the coals and made his sin flame out the more. Satan's subtilty was in tempting *Adam* by his wife, he thought she would draw him to sin.

(4.) Satan's subtilty in tempting, was in assaulting *Eve's* faith: he would persuade her that God had not spoken truth, *Ye shall not surely die*, Gen. iii. 4. This was Satan's masterpiece, to weaken her faith: when he had shaken that, and had wrought her once to distrust; then she yielded, she presently put forth her hand to evil.

2ly, Satan's cruelty in tempting: as soon as *Adam* was invested in all his glory, the devil cruelly, as it were on the day of *Adam's* coronation, would dethrone him, and bring both him and all his posterity under a curse: we see how little love Satan hath to mankind; he hath an implacable antipathy against us, and antipathies can never be reconciled. So much for the occasion of *Adam's* sin, tempted by the serpent.

II. The sin itself, *Eating the forbidden fruit*: This was very hainous, and that appears three ways; 1. In respect of the person that committed it. 2. The aggravation of the sin. 3. The dreadfulnes of the effect.

1st, Very hainous in respect of the person that committed it: *Adam* had excellent and noble endowments; he was illuminated with knowledge, embellished with holiness; he knew his duty, and it was as easy to him to obey God's command, as to know it; he might have chosen

whether he would sin or no, yet he wilfully did eat of the tree which he was forbidden.

2ly, The aggravation of *Adam's* sin.

Qu. *Wherein did it appear to be so great? 'Twas but raptus pomi; was this such a great matter to pluck an apple?*

Ans. Besides that, it was against an infinite God; it was *malum complexum*, a voluminous sin, there were many sins twisted together in it; as *Cicero* saith of parricide, He who is guilty of it, *Plurima committit peccata in uno*, he commits many sins in one; so there were many sins in this one sin of *Adam*. A big-bellied sin, a chain with many links. Ten sins in it. 1. Incredulity. Our first parents did not believe what God had spoken was truth. God said, *They shall die the death*, in the day they eat of that tree. They believed not that they should die; they could not be persuaded that such fair fruit had death at the core. Thus, by unbelief they made God a liar; nay, which was worse, they believed the devil rather than God.

2. Unthankfulness, which is the epitome of all sin. *Adam's* sin was committed in the midst of Paradise: God had enriched him with variety of mercies: he had stamped his own image upon him; he had made him lord of the world, gave him of all the trees of the garden to eat (one only excepted) and now to take of that tree! This was high ingratitude; this was like the dye to the wool, which made it crimson. When *Adam's* eyes were opened, and he saw what he had done, well he might be ashamed, and hide himself: to sin in the midst of Paradise, how could he look God in the face without blushing.

3. In *Adam's* sin was discontent: had he not been discontented, he would never have sought to have altered his condition. *Adam*, one would think, had enough, he differed but little from the angels, he had the robe of innocency to clothe him, and the glory of Paradise to crown him; yet he was not content, he would have more; he would be above the ordinary rank of creatures. How wide was *Adam's* heart, that a whole world could not fill it!

4. Pride, in that he would be like God: this worm, that was but newly crept out of the dust, now aspires after a Deity; *Ye shall be as gods*, saith Satan, and *Adam* hoped to have been so indeed; he supposed the tree of knowledge would have anointed his eyes, and made him omniscient. But, by climbing too high, he got a fall.



5. Disobedience: God said, *Thou shalt not eat of the tree*; he would eat of it, though it cost him his life. Disobedience is a sin against equity: it is equal we should serve him from whom we have our subsistence; God gave *Adam* his allowance, therefore it was but equal he should give God his allegiance: therefore disobedience was against equity. How could God endure to see his laws trampled on before his face? This made God place a flaming sword at the end of the garden.

6. Curiosity, to meddle with that which was out of his sphere, and did not belong to him. God smote the men of *Bethshemesb* but for looking into the ark, 1 *Sam.* vi. 19. *Adam* would be prying into God's secrets, and tasting what was forbidden.

7. Wantonness: though *Adam* had choice of all the other trees, yet his palate grew wanton, and he must have this tree. Like *Israel*, God sent them manna, angels food, ay, but they had an hankering after quails; it was not enough God did supply their wants, unless he should satisfy their lusts. *Adam* had not only for necessity, but for delight; yet his wanton palate lusted after forbidden fruit.

8. Sacrilege: the tree of knowledge was none of *Adam's*, yet he took of it, and did sacrilegiously rob God of his due. It was counted a great crime in *Harpalus* to rob the temple, and steal the silver vessels; so in *Adam* to steal fruit from

that tree, which God had peculiarly enclosed for himself. Sacrilege is double theft.

9. Murder: *Adam* was a public person, and all his posterity was involved and wrapped up in him; and he sinning, did at once destroy all his posterity, if free grace did not interpose. If *Abel's* blood did cry so loud in God's ears, *Gen.* iv. 10. *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground*; then how loud did the blood of all *Adam's* posterity cry against him for vengeance?

10. Presumption: *Adam* presumed of God's mercy; he blessed himself, saying, he should have peace: he thought, though he did transgress, he should not die; God would sooner reverse his decree, than punish him. High presumption! what an heinous sin then was *Adam's* breach of covenant.

*Use.* One sin may have many sins in it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, it is but a little one. How many sins were in *Adam's* sin? O take heed of any sin! as in one volume there may be many works bound up, so there may be many sins in one sin.

3dly, The dreadfulnes of the effect: it hath corrupted man's nature. How rank is that poison, a drop whereof should poison a whole sea? And how deadly is that sin of *Adam*, that should poison all mankind, and bring a curse upon them, till it be taken away by him, who was made a curse for us.



## ORIGINAL SIN.

**D** *ID* all mankind fall in *Adam's* transgression?

*Ans.* The covenant being made with *Adam*, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

*Rom.* v. 12. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, &c.*

*Adam* being a representative person, he standing, we stood; and he falling, we fell. We sinned in *Adam*; so it is in the text, *In whom all have sinned.*

*Adam* was the head of mankind, and he being guilty, we are guilty, as the children of a traitor have their blood stained: *Omnes unus ille Adam*

*fuerunt*, Aug. "All of us (saith *Austin*) sinned in *Adam*, because we were part of *Adam*."

*Obj.* If, when *Adam* fell, all mankind fell with him; why then, when one angel fell, did not all fall?

*Ans.* The case is not the same. The angels had no relation to one another; they are called morning-stars; the stars have no dependance one upon another: but it is otherwise with us, we are in *Adam's* loins; as a child is a branch of the parent, we were part of *Adam*; therefore he sinning, we sinned.

*Qu.* How is *Adam's* sin made ours?

*Ans.* 1. By imputation. The *Pelagians* of old held, that *Adam's* transgression is hurtful to posterity by imitation only, not by imputation.

tation. But the text confutes that, *In whom all have sinned.*

2. Adam's sin is ours by propagation. Not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to us, but the pravity and corruption of his nature is derived to us, as poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern. This is that which we call original sin, *Psal. li. 5. In sin did my mother conceive me.* Adam's leprosy cleaves to us, as Naaman's leprosy did cleave to Gehazi, *2 Kings v. 27.* This original concupiscence is called,

1. The old man, *Eph. iv. 22.* It is said to be the old man, not that it is weak, as old men are, but for its long standing, and of its deformity. In old age the fair blossoms of youth fall; so original sin is the old man, because it hath withered our beauty, and made us deformed in God's eye.

2. Original concupiscence is called the law of sin, *Rom. vii. 25.* Original sin hath *vim-coactivam*, the power of a law: a law binds the subject to allegiance. Men must needs do what sin would have them, when they have both the love of sin to draw them, and the law of sin to force them. In original sin there is something privative, and something positive.

(1.) Something privative. *Carentia Justitiæ debita*, we have lost that excellent quintessential frame of soul which once we had. Sin hath cut the lock of original purity, where our strength lay.

(2.) Something positive. Original sin hath contaminated and defiled our virgin nature. It was death among the *Romans* to poison the springs. Original sin hath poisoned the spring of our nature, it hath turned beauty into leprosy; it hath turned the azure brightness of our souls into a midnight darkness.

Original sin hath become natural to us. A man by nature cannot but sin; though there were no devil to tempt, no bad examples to imitate, yet there is such an innate principle in him, that he cannot forbear sinning, *2 Pet. ii. 14. A peccato cessare nesciunt*, who cannot cease to sin, as an horse that is lame cannot go without halting.---In original sin is,

1. An aversion from good: man hath a desire to be happy, yet opposeth that which should promote his happiness; he hath a disgust of holiness, he hates to be reformed. Since we fell from God, we have no mind to return to him.

2. A propension to evil. If, as the Palagians say, there is so much goodness in us since the

fall, then why is there not as much natural proneness to good, as there is to evil? Our own experience tells us, that the natural bias of the soul hath a tendency to that which is bad. The very heathens by the light of nature saw this; *Hierocles* the philosopher said, it is grafted in us by nature to sin: men roll sin as honey under their tongue.---*They drink iniquity as water*, *Job. xv. 19.* Like an hydropical person, that thirsts for drink, and is not satisfied: so they have a kind of drought on them, they thirst for sin. They sin, *Eph. iv. 19.* though they are tired out in committing sin, yet they sin, *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity*; as a man that follows his game while he is weary, yet he delights in it, and cannot leave off. Though God hath set so many flaming swords in the way to stop men in their sin, yet they go on in sin; which all shews what a strong appetite they have to the forbidden fruit.

That we may further see the nature of original sin, consider, (1.) The universality of it; it hath, as a poison, diffused itself into all the parts and powers of our soul, *Isa. i. 5. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.* Like a sick patient, that hath no part sound, his liver swelled, his feet gangrened, his lungs perished; such infected, gangrened souls have we, till Christ (who hath made a medicine of his blood) do cure us.

1. Original sin hath depraved the intellectual part. As in the creation *darkness was upon the face of the deep*, *Gen. i. 2.* So the understanding; darkness is upon the face of this deep. As there is salt in every drop of sea, bitterness in every branch of wormwood, so there is sin in every faculty, the mind is darkened, we know little of God. Ever since Adam did eat of the tree of knowledge, and his eyes were opened, we lost our eye-sight. Besides ignorance in the mind, there is error and mistake; we do not judge rightly of things, we put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, *Isa. v. 20.* Besides this, there is much pride, superciliousness and prejudice, many fleshly reasonings against the truth, and swarms of vain thoughts, *Jer. iv. 14. How long shall vain thoughts lodge in thee?*

2. Original sin hath defiled the heart: the heart is *mortiferum junius*, deadly wicked, *Jer. xvii. 9.* It is a lesser hell. In the heart are legions of lusts, obduracy, infidelity, hypocrisy, sinful estimations; it boils as the sea with passion and revenge. Madness is in their heart while they live, *Eccl. ix. 3.* The heart is *Officina diaboli*, the



the devil's shop or work-house, where all mischief is framed.

2. The Will. Contumacy is the seat of rebellion: The sinner crosseth God's will, to fulfil his own, *Jer. xlv. 17. We will burn incense to the queen of heaven.* There is a rooted enmity in the will against holiness; it is like an iron sinew, it refuseth to bend to God. Where is then the freedom of the will? when it is so full not only of indisposition, but opposition to what is spiritual.

4. The Affections. These, as the strings of a viol, are out of tune. These are the lesser wheels, which are strongly carried on by the will, the master-wheel. Our affections are misplaced, set on wrong objects. Our love is set on sin, our joy on the creature. Our affections are naturally as a sick man's appetite, he desires things which are noxious and hurtful for him; he calls for wine in a fever: So we have impure lustings, instead of holy longings.

(2.) The adherency of original sin. It cleaves to us as blackness to the skin of the Ethiopian, we cannot get rid of it. *Paul* shook off the viper on his hand, but we cannot shake off this inbred corruption: It may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, though the roots of it are pulled up, yet there are some strings of it in the joints of the stone-work, which will not be eradicated, but will sprout forth till the wall be pulled to pieces. Original concupiscence comes not as a lodger, for a night, but is an indweller, *Rom. vii. 17. Sin which dwelleth in me.*

It is a *malus genius*, an evil spirit, that haunts us wheresoever we go, *Josh. vii. 12. The Canaanite would dwell in the land.*

(3.) Original sin retards and hinders us in the exercises of God's worship. Whence is all that dulness and deadness in religion? It is the fruit of original sin: It is this rocks us asleep in duty, *Rom. vii. 19. The good that I would, I do not.* Sin is compared to a weight, *Heb. xii. 1.* A man that hath weights tied to his legs, cannot run so fast: It is like that fish *Pliny* speaks of, a sea-lamprey, that cleaves to the keel of the ship, and hinders its progress when it is under sail.

(4.) Original sin, tho' it lies latent in the soul, and be as a spring which runs underground, yet oft it breaks forth unexpectedly. Christian, thou canst not believe that evil which is in thy heart, and which will break forth suddenly, if God leave thee; *2 Kings viii. 13. 15.*

*Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? Hazeel* could not believe he had such a root of bitterness in his heart, that he should rip up the women with child; *Is thy servant a dog?* Yes, and worse than a dog, when that original corruption within was stirred up. If one had come to *Peter*, and said, *Peter*, within a few hours thou wilt deny Christ; he would have said, *Is thy servant a dog?* But alas! *Peter* did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him. The sea may be calm, and look clear; but when the wind blows, how doth it rage and foam? so tho' now thy heart seems good, yet when a temptation blows, how may original sin discover itself, making thee foam with lust and passion. Who would have thought to have found adultery in *David*, and drunkenness in *Noah*, and cursing in *Job*? If God leave a man to himself, how suddenly and scandalously may original sin break forth in the holiest men alive?

(5.) Original sin doth mix and incorporate itself with our duties and graces.

1. With our duties. As the hand which is paralytical or palsy, cannot move without shaking, as wanting some inward strength; so we cannot do any holy action without sinning, as wanting a principle of original righteousness. As the leper, whatever he touched became unclean: if he touched the altar, the altar did not sanctify him, but he polluted the altar; such a leprosy is original sin, it defiles our prayers and tears; we cannot write without blotting. Tho' I do not say, that the holy duties and good works of the regenerate are sins, for that were to reproach the spirit of Christ, by which they are wrought; yet this I say, that the best works of the godly have sin cleaving to them; only Christ's blood makes atonement for our holy things.

2. With our Graces. There is some unbelief mixed with faith, lukewarmness with zeal, pride with humility. As bad lungs cause an asthma, or shortness of breath, so original corruption having infected our heart, our graces breathe now very faintly.

(6.) Original sin is a vigorous active principle within us; it doth not ly still, but is ever exciting and stirring us up to evil; it is an inmate, very unquiet; *Rom. vii. 15. What I hate, that I do.* How came *Paul* to do so? Original sin did irritate and stir him up to it. Original sin is like quicksilver, always in motion; when

we are asleep, sin is awake in the fancy. Original sin sets the head a plotting evil, and the hands a working it; it hath in it *principium motus*, not *quietis*; it is like the pulse ever-beating.

(7.) Original sin is the *cause of all actual*; it is *fomes peccati*, it is the womb in which all actual sins are conceived. Hence come murders, adulteries, rapines; it is the *Trojan horse*, out of which a whole army of impieties comes. Tho' actual sins may be more *scandalous*, yet original sin is more *heinous*; the cause is more than the effect.

(8.) It is not *perfectly cured* in this life. Grace, tho' it doth subdue sin, yet not wholly remove it. Tho' we are like Christ, having the *first fruits* of the spirit, yet we are unlike him, having the *remainders* of the flesh. There are two nations in the womb. Original sin is like that tree, *Dan. iv. 23.* tho' the branches of it were hewen down, and the main body of it, yet the stumps and root of the tree were left: Tho' the spirit be still weakning and hewing down sin in the godly, yet the stump of original sin is still left: It is a sea that will not, in this life, be dried up.

*Qu. But why doth God leave original corruption in us after regeneration? He could quite free us from it, if he pleased.*

*Ans.* He doth it, to shew the power of his grace in the weakest believer. Grace shall prevail against a torrent of corruption. Whence is this? the corruption is ours, but the grace is God's.

2. God leaves original corruption, to make us long after heaven; when there shall be no sin to defile, no devil to tempt. When *Elias* was taken up to heaven, his mantle dropped off; so, when the angels shall carry us up to heaven, this mantle of sin shall drop off: We shall never more complain of an aking head, or an unbelieving heart.

*Use 1.* If original sin be propagated to us, and will be inherent in us while we live here, then it confutes the *Libertines* and *Quakers*, who say they are without sin; they hold perfection; they shew much pride and ignorance; but we see the seeds of original sin remain in the best, *Eccl. vii. 20.* *There is not a just man lives, and sins not.* And Saint Paul complained of a *body of death*, *Rom. vii. 24.* Grace, tho' it doth purify nature, it doth not perfect it.

*Obj.* But doth not the Apostle say of believers, that their *old man is crucified*, *Rom. vi.*

6. and they are *dead to sin*? *Rom. vii. 11.*

*Ans.* They are dead, 1. Spiritually. They are dead as to the *reatus*, the guilt of it; and as to the *regnum*, the power of it; the love of sin is crucified.

2. They are dead to sin legally. As a man that is sentenced to death is dead in law, so they are legally dead to sin; there is a sentence of death gone out against sin, it shall die and drop into the grave: But at the present, sin hath its life lengthened out; nothing but the death of the body can quite free us from the body of death.

*Use 2.* Let us lay to heart original sin, and be deeply humbled for it; it cleaves to us as a disease, it is an active principle in us, stirring us up to evil. Original sin is worse than all actual sin; the fountain is more than the stream. Some think, as long as they are civil, they are well enough; ay, but thy nature is poisoned; thou hast a proud, lustful, envious nature: A river may have fair streams, but vermin at bottom. Thou carriest an hell about thee, thou canst do nothing but thou defilest it; thy heart, like muddy ground, defiles the purest water that runs thorough it. Nay, tho' thou art regenerate, there is much of the old man in the new man. O how should original sin humble us! This is one reason God hath left original sin in us, because he would have it as a thorn in our side to humble us. As the bishop of *Alexandria*, after the people had embraced christianity, destroyed all their idols but one, that the sight of that idol might make them lothe themselves for their former idolatry; so God leaves original sin to pull down the plumes of pride. Under our silver wings of grace are black feet.

2. Let the sense of this make us daily look up to heaven for help; beg Christ's blood to wash away the guilt of sin, and his spirit to mortify the power of it; beg further degrees of grace; *gratiam Christi eo obnoxius ambiamus.* Tho' grace cannot make sin not to be, yet not to reign; tho' grace cannot expel sin, it can repel it: And, for our comfort, where grace makes a combat with sin, death shall make a conquest.

3. Let original sin make us walk with continual jealousy and watchfulness over our heart. The sin of our nature is like a sleeping lion, the least thing that awakens it makes it rage. The sin of our nature, tho' it seems quiet, and lies as fire hid under the embers, yet if it be a little stirred and blown up by a temptation, how quickly may it flame forth into scandalous evils?



evils? therefore we had need always walk watchfully, *Mark xiii. 37. I say to you all, eye. Watch.* A wandering heart needs a watchful eye.



## MAN'S MISERY BY THE FALL.

**W**HAT is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

*Ans.* All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

*Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature children of wrath. Adam* left an unhappy portion to his posterity, *Sin and Misery.* We have already considered the first of these, original sin, now the misery of that estate; in the first, we have seen mankind offending, in the second, we shall see him suffering. The misery ensuing original sin is two-fold.

**I. Privative.** By this first hereditary sin we have lost communion with God. *Adam* was God's familiar, his favourite; but sin hath put us all out of favour: when we lost God's image, we lost his acquaintance. God's banishing *Adam* out of Paradise, hieroglyphically, it shewed how sin hath banished us out of God's love and favour.

**II. Positive.** In four things. 1. Under the power of Satan. 2. Heirs of God's wrath. 3. Subject to all miseries in this life. 4. Obnoxious to hell and damnation.

*1st,* The first misery is, By nature we are under the power of Satan, who is called, *The prince of the power of the air*, *Eph. ii. 2.* Before the fall man was a free denison, now a slave; before a king on the throne, now in fetters. And who is men enslaved to? To one that is an hater of him. This was an aggravation of *Israel's* servitude, *Pf. cvi. 41. They that hated them ruled over them.* By sin we are enslaved to Satan, who is an hater of mankind, and writes all his laws in blood. Sinners before conversion are under Satan's command, as the ass at the command of the driver, he doth all the devil's drudgery. No sooner Satan tempts, but he obeys: as the ship is at the command of the pilot, he steers it which way he will, so is the sinner at the command of Satan, he may steer him which way he will;

and he never steers the ship but into hell's mouth. The devil rules all the powers and faculties of a sinner.

**1.** He rules the understanding: he blinds men with ignorance, and then rules them; as the Philistines first put out *Samson's* eyes, and then bound him. Satan can do what he will with an ignorant man: he doth not see the error of his way, therefore the devil can lead him into any sin; you may lead a blind man any whither: *Omne peccatum fundatur in ignorantia.*

**2.** Satan rules the will: tho' he cannot force the will, yet he can, by a temptation, draw it, *John viii. 44. The lusts of your father ye will do.* He hath got your hearts, and him ye will obey. *Jer. xlv. 17. We will burn incense to the queen of heaven.* When the devil spurs a sinner by a temptation, he will over hedge and ditch, break all God's laws, that he may obey Satan: *Where then is free will?* When Satan hath such power over the will, *his lusts ye will do.* There's not any member of the body but is at the devil's service: the head to plot sin, the hands to work it, the feet to run the devil's errand. *Grave jugum servitutis*, Cicero. Slavery is hateful to a noble spirit. Satan is the worst tyrant; the cruelty of *Cannibal*, or *Nero*, is nothing to his. Other tyrants do but rule over the bodies, he over the conscience: other tyrants have some pity on their slaves, though they work in the galley, they give them meat, let them have hours for rest; but Satan is a *Merciless Tyrant*, he lets men have no rest. What pains did *Judas* take? The devil would let him have no rest till he had betrayed Christ, and afterwards embrewed his hands in his own blood.

*Use 1.* See here our misery by original sin, enslaved to Satan, *Eph. ii. 2.* Satan is said to work effectually in the children of disobedience: What a sad plague is this for a sinner to be at the will of the devil? Just like a slave, if the Turk bids him dig in the mines, hew in the quarries, tug at the oar, the slave must do it, he dares not refuse. If the devil bids a man lie

or cozen, he doth not refuse; and, which is worse, men are enslaved, and they willingly obey this tyrant: other slaves are forced against their will; *Israel sighed by reason of their bondage*, Exod. ii. 23. But sinners are willing to be slaves, they will not take their freedom; they kiss their fetters.

*Use 2.* Let us labour to get out of this deplorable condition sin hath plunged us into; get from under the power of Satan: if any of your children were slaves, you would give great sums of money to purchase their freedom; your souls are enslaved, and will you not labour to be set free? Improve the gospel; the gospel proclaims a jubilee to captives; sin binds men, the gospel looseth them; *Paul's preaching was to turn men from the power of Satan to God*, Acts xxvi. 18. The gospel-star leads you to Christ; and if you get Christ, then you are made free, tho' not from the being of sin, yet from Satan's tyranny, *John viii. 36. If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* You hope to be kings to reign in heaven, and will you let Satan reign in you now? Never think to be kings when you die, and slaves while you live: the crown of glory is for conquerors, not for captives. Oh! get out of Satan's jurisdiction; get your fetters of sin filed off by repentance.

*2d.* Misery [*We are heirs of God's wrath.*] In the text, *and were by nature the children of wrath.* *Tertullian's* exposition here is wrong, *children of wrath*, he understands subjective, that is, subject to wrath and passion; offending often in the irascible faculty of a wrathful spirit. But, by *children of wrath*, the apostle passively means *heirs of wrath*, exposed to God's displeasure. God was once a friend, but sin broke the knot of friendship; now God's smile is turned into a frown: we are now bound over to the sessions, and become children of wrath; *And who knows the power of God's wrath?* *Pf. xc. 11. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion*, Prov. xix. 12. How did *Haman's* heart tremble, when the king rose up from the banquet in wrath? *Ezr. vii. 7.* But God's wrath is infinite, all other is but as a spark to a flame: wrath in God is not a passion, as in us; but it is an act of God's holy will, whereby he abhors sin, and decrees to punish it. This wrath is very dismal, it is the wrath of God that imbrues afflictions in this life; when sickness comes attended with God's wrath, it puts conscience into an agony. The mingling of the sin with the hail made it so terrible, *Exod. ix. 24.* so

mingling God's wrath with affliction, makes it torturing; it is the nail in the yoke. God's wrath, when but in a threatening (as a shower hanging in the cloud) made *Eli's* ears to tingle: what is it then, when this wrath is executed? It is terrible when the king rates and chides a traitor; but it is more dreadful when he causeth him to be set upon the rack, or to be broke upon the wheel: *Who knows the power of God's wrath?* While we are children of wrath, 1. We have nothing to do with any of the promises; they are as the tree of life, bearing several sorts of fruit, but no right to pluck one leaf, *Eph. ii. 3. Children of wrath.* Ver. 12. *Strangers to the covenant of promise.* The promises are as a fountain sealed. While we are in the state of nature, we see nothing but the flaming sword; and, as the apostle saith, *Heb. x. 27. There remains nothing but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation.* 2. While children of wrath we are *heirs to all God's curses*, *Gal. iii. 10.* How can the sinner eat and drink in that condition? Like *Damaris's* banquet, he sat at meat, and there was a sword hanging over his head by a small thread; one would think he should have little stomach to eat: so the sword of God's wrath and curse hangs every moment over a sinner's head. We read of a flying roll written with curses, *Zech. v. 3.* There's a roll written with curses goes out against every person that lives and dies in sin: God's curse blasts wherever it comes. A curse on the sinner's name, a curse on his soul, a curse on his estate, posterity, a curse on the ordinances. Sad, if all a man did eat should turn to poison: the sinner eats and drinks his own damnation at God's table. Thus it is before conversion. As the love of God makes every bitter thing sweet, so the curse of God makes every sweet thing bitter.

*Use.* See our misery by the fall, *Heirs of wrath*: and is this estate to be rested in? If a man be fallen under the king's displeasure, will he not labour to re-ingratiate himself into his favour? O let us flee from the wrath of God! And whither should we fly, but to Jesus Christ? there's none else to shield off the wrath of God from us, *1 Thess. i. 10. Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.*

3. Subject to all outward miseries: all the troubles incident to man's life are the bitter fruits of original sin. The sin of *Adam* hath subjected the creature to vanity, *Rom. viii. 20.* Is it not a part of the creature's vanity, that all



the comforts here below will not fill the heart, no more than the mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship; *Job xx. 22. In the midst of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.* There is still something wanting, and a man would have more: the heart is always hydropical; it thirsts, and is not satisfied. *Solomon* put all the creatures into a lembic; and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, there was nothing but froth, *all was vanity*, *Eccl. i. 2.* Nay, it is vexing vanity; not only emptiness, but bitterness. Our life is labour and sorrow; we come into the world with a cry, go out with a groan, *Pf. xc. 10.* Some have said, that they would not be to live the life they have lived over again, because their life hath had more water in it than wine; more water of tears, than wine of joy: *Quid est diu vivere nisi diu torqueri*, *Aug.* Man is born to trouble, *Job v. 7.* Every one is not born heir to land, but he is born heir to trouble; as well separate weight from lead. We do not finish our troubles in this life, but change them. Trouble is the vermine bred out of the putrid matter of sin. Whence are all our fears, but from sin? *1 John iv. 18. There is torment in fear.* Fear is the ague of the soul, sets it a shaking: some fear want, others alarms, others fear loss of relations: If we rejoice, it is with trembling. Whence are all our disappointments of hopes, but from sin? Where we look for comfort, there a cross: where we expect honey, there we taste wormwood. Whence is it that the earth is filled with violence, that the wicked oppresseth the man which is more righteous than he? *Hab. i. 13.* Whence is it that so much fraudulency in dealing, so much falseness in friendship, such crosses in relations? Whence is it children prove undutiful? They that should be as the staff of the parents age, are a sword to pierce their hearts: Whence is it servants are unfaithful to their masters? The apostle speaks of some who have entertained angels into their houses, *Heb. xiii. 2.* But how oft, instead of entertaining angels in their houses, do some entertain devils? Whence are all the mutinies and divisions in a kingdom? *2 Chron. xv. 5. In those days there was no peace to them that went out, nor to him that came in.* All this is but the sower core in that apple our first parents ate, *viz.* fruit of original sin. Besides, all the deformities and diseases of the body, fevers, convulsions, catarrhs, *Macies & nova febrium terris incubuit cohor* --- These are from sin. There had never been

a stone in the kidneys, if it had not been first a stone in the heart. Yea, the death of the body, is the fruit and result of original sin, *Rom. v. 12. Sin entered into the world, and death by sin.* Adam was made immortal, conditionally, if he had not sinned; sin dig'd Adam's grave. Death is terrible to nature: *Lewis* king of France forbade all that came into his court, to mention the name of death in his ears. The Socinians say, that death comes only from the infirmness of the constitution. But the apostle saith, Sin usher'd in death into the world: by sin came death. Certainly, had not Adam eat of the tree of knowledge, he had not died, *Gen. ii. 17. In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely (die,)* implying, if Adam had not eat, he should not have died. O then see the misery ensuing upon original sin! Sin dissolves the harmony and good temperature of the body, it pulls this frame in pieces.

4. Original sin without repentance exposeth to hell and damnation. This is the second death, *Rev. xx. 14.* Two things in it.

(1.) *Pœna Damni*, Punishment of loss; The soul is banished from the beatifical presence of God, in whose presence is fulness of joy.

(2.) *Pœna sensus*, Punishment of sense; the sinner feels the scalding viols of God's wrath: It is penetrating, abiding, *John iii. 36.* Reserved, *2 Pet. ii. 17.* If, when God's anger be kindled but a little, and a spark or two of it flies into a man's conscience here in this life, it be so terrible; what then will it be when God stirs up all his anger? In hell there is the worm and the fire, *Mark ix. 44.* Hell is the very accent and emphasis of misery: there's judgment without mercy. O what flames of wrath, what seas of vengeance, what rivers of brimstone, are poured out there upon the damned! *Bellarmino* is of opinion, That one glimpse of hell-fire were enough to make the most flagitious sinner turn Christian; nay, live like an hermit, a most strict mortified life. What is all other fire to this, but painted fire? *Ejus adesse intolerabile, ejus abesse impossibile*; to bear it will be intolerable, to avoid it will be impossible; and these hell-torments are for ever, have no period put to them, *Rev. ix. 6. They shall seek death, and shall not find it.* *Origen* fancied a fiery stream, in which the souls of sinful men were to be purged after this life, and then to pass into heaven; but it is for ever. The breath of the Lord kindles that fire; and where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it? *Rev.*

xiv. 11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest night nor day.* Thank original sin for all.

Use 1. What sad thoughts should we have of this primitive original sin, that hath created so many miseries? What honey can be got out of this lion? What grapes can we gather off this thorn? It sets heaven and earth against us: while we chuse this bramble to rule, fire comes out of the bramble to devour us.

2. How are all believers bound to Jesus Christ,

who hath freed them from that misery to which sin hath exposed them? *Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood.* Sin hath brought trouble and a curse into the world: Christ hath sanctified the trouble, and removed the curse. Nay, he hath not only freed believers from misery, but purchased for them a *crown of glory and immortality, 1 Pet. v. 4. When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Q. XIV. **D**ID God leave all mankind to perish in this estate of sin and misery?

Ans. No, he entered into a covenant of grace to deliver the elect out of that estate, and bring them into a state of grace by a redeemer.

ISA. lv. 3. *I will make an everlasting covenant with you.* Man being by his fall, plunged into a labyrinth of misery, and having no way left to recover himself, God was pleased to enter into a new covenant with him, and so restore him to life by a redeemer.

The great proposition I shall go upon, is, that there is a new covenant ratified between God and the elect.

Qu. *What is the new covenant?*

Ans. It is a solemn compact and agreement made between God and fallen man, wherein the Lord undertakes to be our God, and to make us his people.

Qu. *What names are given to the covenant?*

Ans. It is called a covenant of peace, *Ezek. xxxvii. 26.* because it seals up reconciliation between God and humble sinners. Before this covenant there was nothing but enmity: God did not love us; a creature that offends cannot be loved by an holy God: and we did not love him; a God that condemns, cannot be loved by a guilty creature; so that there was war on both sides. But God hath found out a way in the new covenant to reconcile differing parties, so that it is fitly called a covenant of peace.

2. It is called a covenant of grace, and well it may: For, 1. It was with grace, that, when we had forfeited the first covenant, God should enter into a new covenant, after we had cast away ourselves. The covenant of grace is *tabula*

*post naufragium*, as a plank after shipwreck. O the free grace of God, that he should parly with sinners, and set his wisdom and mercy a-work to bring rebels into the bond of the covenant.

(2.) It is a covenant of grace, because it is a royal charter, all made up of terms of grace; that *God will cast our sins behind his back: that he will love us freely, Hos. xiv. 4. That he will give us a will to accept of the mercy of the covenant, and strength to perform the conditions of the covenant, Ezek. xxxvii. 26.* All this is pure grace.

Qu. *Why would God make a covenant with us?*

Ans. It is out of indulgence, favour and respect to us. A tyrant will not enter into a covenant with slaves, he will not shew them such respect. God's entering into covenant with us, to be our God, is a dignity he puts upon us. A covenant is *insigne honoris*, a note of distinction between God's people and heathens, *Ezek. xvi. 22. I will establish my covenant with thee.* When the Lord told Abraham that he would enter into covenant with him, *Abraham fell upon his face, Gen. xvii. 2.* as being amazed that the God of glory should bestow such a favour upon him.

2. God makes a covenant with us, to tie us fast to him; it is called in *Ezekiel, the bond of the covenant.* God knows we have slippery hearts, therefore he will have a covenant to bind us: it is horrid impiety to go away from God after covenant. If one of the vestal nuns, who had vowed herself to religion, was deflowered, the Romans caused her to be burnt alive. It is perjury to depart from God after solemn covenant.



*Qu. How doth the covenant of grace differ from the first covenant made with Adam?*

*Ans. 1. Difference.* The terms of the first covenant were more strict and severe. For, 1. The least failing would have made the covenant with Adam null and void, but many failings do not null the covenant of grace: I grant, the least sin is a trespass upon the covenant, but it doth not make it null and void. There may be many failings in the conjugal relation, but every failing doth not break the marriage-bond. It would be sad, if, as oft as we break covenant with God he should break covenant with us; but God, will not take advantage of every failing, but in *anger remember mercy*.

2. The first covenant being broken, allowed the sinner no remedy, all doors of hope were shut; but the new covenant allows the sinner a remedy: it leaves room for repentance, it provides a mediator, *Heb. xii. 24. Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*.

*2d Differ.* The first covenant did run all upon working, the second upon believing *Rom. iv. 5*.

*Q. But are not works required in the covenant of grace?*

*Ans. Yes; Tit. iii. 8. This is a faithful saying, that they which believe in God, be careful to maintain good works.* But the covenant of grace doth not require works in the same manner as the covenant of works did. In the first covenant, works were required as the condition of life; in the second, they are required only as the signs of a man that is alive. In the first covenant, works were required as grounds of salvation; in the new covenant, they are required as evidences of our love to God. In the first, they were required to the justification of our persons; in the new, to the testification of our grace.

*Q. What is the condition of the covenant of grace?*

*Ans.* The main condition is faith.

*Qu. But why is faith more the condition of the new covenant than any other grace?*

*Ans.* To exclude all glorying in the creature: faith is an humble grace. If repentance or works were the condition of the covenant, a man would say, It is my righteousness hath saved me: but if it be of faith, where is boasting? Faith fetcheth all from Christ, and gives all the glory to Christ; it is a most humble grace. Hence it is God hath singled out this grace to be the condition of the covenant.

And if faith be the condition of the covenant of grace, it excludes desperate *presumptuous sinners* from the covenant. They say there is

a covenant of grace, and they shall be saved: but did you ever know a bond without a condition? The condition of the covenant is faith, and if thou hast no faith, thou hast no more to do with the covenant than a foreigner or a country-farmer with the city-charter.

*Use 1. Of information.* See the amazing goodness of God, to enter into covenant with us: he never entered into covenant with the angels when they fell. It was much condescension in God to enter into covenant with us in a state of innocency, but it was more to enter into a state of enmity. In this covenant of grace, we may see the *cream* of God's love, and the working of his bowels to sinners. This is a marriage covenant, *Jer. iii. 14. I am married to you, saith the Lord*. In the new covenant, God makes himself over to us, and what can he give more? And he makes over his promises to us, and what better bond can we have?

*Use 2. Of trial.* Whether we are in covenant with God. There are three characters:

1. God's covenant-people are an humble people, *1 Pet. v. 5. Be ye clothed with humility*. God's people esteem of others better than themselves; they shrink into nothing in their own thoughts, *Phil. ii. 3. David* cries out, *I am a worm, and no man*, *Pf. xxii. 6.* though a *saint*, though a *king*, yet a *worm*. When *Moses's* face shined, he covered it with a veil: God's people, when they shine most in grace, are covered with the veil of humility. Pride excludes from the covenant; *God resisteth the proud*, *1 Pet. i. 3.* and sure such are not in covenant with God, whom he resists.

2. A people in covenant with God, are a willing people; though they cannot serve God perfectly, they serve him willingly. They do not grudge God a little time spent in his worship; they do not hesitate or murmur at sufferings; they will go through a sea and a wilderness, if God calls; *Pf. cx. 3. Thy people shall be a willing people: Heb. a people of willingness*. This spontaneity and willingness, is from the *attractive* power of God's spirit: the spirit doth not *impellere*, force, but *trahere*, sweetly draw the will; and this willingness in religion, makes all our services *accepted*. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never the work without willingness.

3. God's covenant-people are a consecrated people, they have *holiness to the Lord* written upon them; *Deut. vii. 6. Thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God*. God's covenant-people are separated

separated from the world, and sanctified by the spirit. The priests under the law were not only to wash in the great laver, but were arrayed with glorious apparel, *Exod. xxviii. 2.* This was typical, to shew God's people are not only washed from gross sins, but adorned with holiness of heart: they bear not only God's name, but image. *Tamerlain* refused a pot of gold, when he saw it had not his father's stamp upon it, but the Roman stamp. Holiness is God's stamp, if he doth not see this stamp upon us, he will not own us for his covenant people.

*Use 3. Of Exhortation.* To such as are out of covenant, labour to get into covenant, and have God for your God. How glad would the old world have been of an ark? How industrious should we be to get within the ark of the covenant?

Consider, 1. The misery of such as live and die out of covenant with God. (1.) Such have none to go to in an hour of distress. When conscience accuseth, when sickness approacheth (which is but an harbinger to bespeak a lodging for death) then what will you do? Whither will you flee? Will you look to Christ for help? He is a mediator only for such as are in covenant. O how will you be filled with horror and despair! and be as *Saul*, *2 Sam. xxviii. 15.* *The Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed.* (2.) Till you are in covenant with God, there is no mercy. The mercy-seat was placed upon the ark, and the mercy-seat was no larger than the ark; to shew, that the mercy of God reacheth no further than the covenant.

2. The excellency of the covenant of grace; it is a better covenant than the covenant made with *Adam*. 1<sup>st</sup>, Because it is more friendly and propitious. Those services which would have been rejected in the first covenant, are accepted in the second. Here God accepts of the will for the deed, *2 Cor. viii. 10.* here sincerity is crowned. In the covenant of grace, wherein we are weak, God will give strength; and wherein we come short, God will accept of a surety. 2<sup>dly</sup>, It is a better covenant, because it is surer, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* *Thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.* The first covenant was not sure, it stood upon a tottering foundation; works; *Adam* had no sooner a stock of righteousness to trade with, but he broke: but the covenant of grace is sure; it is confirmed with God's decree, and it rests upon two mighty pillars, the oath of God, and the blood of God. 3<sup>dly</sup>, It hath better privileges.

The covenant of grace brings preferment. Our nature is now more enobled, we are raised to higher glory than in innocency, we are advanced to sit upon Christ's throne. *Rev. iii. 21.* We are, by virtue of the covenant of grace, nearer to Christ than the angels: they are his friends, we his spouse.

3. God is willing to be in covenant with you. Why doth God woo and beseech you by his ambassadors to be reconciled, if he were not willing to be in covenant.

*Obj.* I would fain be in covenant with God, but I have been a great sinner, and I fear God will not admit me in covenant.

*Ans.* If thou seest thy sins, and lotheest thy self for them, yet God will take thee into covenant, *Isa. xliii. 24.* *Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities, I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.* As the sea covers great rocks, so God's covenant-mercy covers great sins. Some of the *Jews* that crucified Christ, yet had their sins washed away in his blood.

*Ans.* It never came into God's thought to make a new covenant upon terms of worthiness. If God should shew mercy to none but such as are worthy, then he must shew mercy to none at all. But it is God's design in the new covenant to advance the riches of grace, to love us freely; and when we have no worthiness of our own, to accept us through Christ's worthiness. Therefore let not unworthiness discourage you; it is not unworthiness excludes any from the covenant, but unwillingness.

*Qu. What shall we do that we may be in covenant with God?*

*Ans.* 1. Seek to God by prayer. *Exige a Domino misericordiam.* Aug. Lord, be my God in covenant. The Lord hath made an express promise, that, upon our prayer to him, the covenant should be ratified, he will be our God, and we shall be his people, *Zech. xiii. 9.* *They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God.* Only it must be an importunate prayer; come as earnest suiters, resolve to take no denial.

2. If you would be in covenant with God, break off the covenant with sin; before the marriage-covenant there must be a divorce, *1 Sam. vii. 3.* *If ye return to the Lord with all your hearts, put away the strange gods; and they put away Ashtaroth;* viz. their female gods. Will any king enter into covenant with that man who is in league with his enemies?



3. If you would enter into the bond of the covenant, get faith in the blood of the covenant. Christ's blood is the blood of atonement; believe in this blood, and you are safely arked in God's mercy; *Eph. ii. 13. Ye are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

*Use 4. Of comfort* to such as can make out their covenant-interest in God. (1.) You that are in covenant with God, all your sins are pardoned. Pardon is the crowning-mercy, *Psal. ciii. 3. Who forgiveth thy iniquity, who crowneth thee, &c.* This is a branch of the covenant, *Jer. xxxi. 33. I will be their God, and I will forgive their iniquity.* Sin being pardoned, all wrath ceaseth. How terrible is it when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience? but sin being forgiven, no more wrath. God doth not appear now in the fire or earth-quake, but covered with a rain-bow full of mercy.

(2.) All your temporal mercies are fruits of the covenant. Wicked men have mercies by providence, not by virtue of a covenant; with God's leave, not with his love. But such as are in covenant have their mercies sweetened with God's love, and they swim to them in the blood of Christ. As *Naaman* said to *Gehazi*, *2 Kings v. 23. Take two talents*, so saith God to such as are in covenant, take two talents; take health, and take Christ with it; take riches, and take my love with them; take the venison, and take the blessing with it: Take two talents.

(3.) You may upon all occasions, plead the covenant. If you are haunted with temptations, plead the covenant; Lord, thou hast promised to bruise Satan under my feet, shortly; wilt thou suffer thy child to be thus worried? take off the roaring lion. If in want, plead the covenant; Lord, thou hast said, *I shall want no good thing*; wilt thou save me from hell, and not from want? wilt thou give me a kingdom, and deny me daily bread?

(4.) If in covenant with God, all things shall co-operate for your good: *Etiam mala cedunt in bonum*, *Psal. xxv. 10.* Not only golden paths, but his bloody paths. Every wind of providence shall blow them nearer heaven. Affliction shall humble and purify, *Heb. xii. 10.* Out of the bitterest drug, God distils your salvation. Afflictions add to the saints glory. The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the heavier the saints cross is, the heavier shall be their crown.

(5.) If thou art in covenant once, then for ever in covenant. The text calls it, an *everlasting covenant*. Such as are in covenant are elected; God's electing love is unchangeable, *Jer. xxxii. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me.* God will so love the saints, that he will not forsake them: And the saints shall so fear God, that they shall not forsake him. 'Tis a covenant of eternity: It must be so; for who is this covenant made with? Is it not with believers? and have not they coalition and union with Christ? Christ is the head, they are the body. *Eph. i. 23.* This is a near union, much like that union between God the Father and Christ, *John xvii. 21. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be One in us.* Now the union between Christ and the saints being so inseparable, it can never be dissolved, or the covenant made void; you may die with comfort.

(6.) Thou art in covenant with God, and thou art going to thy God: Behold a death-bed cordial; death breaks the union between the body and the soul, but perfects the union between Christ and the soul. This hath made the saints desire death, as the bride the wedding-day, *Phil. i. 23. Cupio dissolvi*, Lead me, Lord, to that glory, (said One) a glimpse whereof I have seen, as in a glass darkly.

*Use 5. Of Direction.* To shew how you should walk who have tasted of covenant-mercy, live as a people in covenant with God. As you differ from others in respect of dignity, so you must in point of carriage.

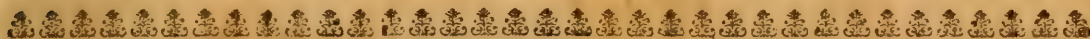
1<sup>st</sup>. You must love this God. God's love to you calls for love. 1. It is *Amor gratiatus*, a free love. Why should God pass by others, and take you into a league of friendship with himself? In the law, God passed by the lion and eagle, and chose the dove: So he passes by the noble and mighty. 2. It is *Amor plenus*, a full love. When God takes you into covenant, you are his *Hephzibah*, *Isa. lxii. 3.* his delight is in you; he gives you the key of all his treasure, he heaps pearls upon you, he settles heaven and earth upon you; he gives you a bunch of grapes by the way, and saith, *Son, all I have is thine.* And doth not all this call for love? who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God.

2<sup>ly</sup>. Walk holily. The covenant hath made you a royal nation, therefore be an holy people. Shine

Shine as lights in the world; live as earthly angels. God hath taken you into covenant, that you and he may have communion together; and what is it keeps up your communion with God, but holiness?

3ly, Walk thankfully, *Psal. ciii. 1.* God is your God in covenant; he hath done more for you, than if he had made you ride upon the high places of the earth, and given you crowns

and scepters. O take the cup of salvation, and bless the Lord. Eternity will be little enough to praise him. Musicians love to play on their music where there is the loudest sound; and God loves to bestow his mercies where he may have the loudest praises. You that have angels reward, do angels work. Begin that work of praise here, which you hope to be always doing in heaven.



## CHRIST THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT.

HEB. xii. 24. *Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, &c.*

**J**ESUS CHRIST is the sum and quintessence of the gospel; the wonder of angels; the joy and triumph of saints. The name of Christ is sweet, it is as music in the ear, honey in the mouth, and a cordial at the heart.

I shall wave the context, and only speak of that which concerns our present purpose: having discoursed of the covenant of grace, I shall speak now of the Mediator of the covenant, and the restorer of lapsed sinners, *JESUS the Mediator of the Covenant.*

There are several names and titles in scripture given to Christ, as the great restorer of mankind: 1. Sometimes he is called a Saviour, *Matth. i. 21. His name shall be called Jesus.* The Hebrew word for *JESUS*, signifies a Saviour; and whom he saves from hell, he saves from sin: where Christ is a Saviour, he is a sanctifier, *Matth. i. 21. He shall save his people from their sins.* There is no other saviour, *Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other.* As there was but one ark to save the world from drowning, so there is but one Jesus to save sinners from damning. As *Naomi* said to her daughters-in-law, *Ruth i. 11. Are there yet any more sons in my womb?* So, hath God any other sons in the womb of his eternal decree, to be saviours to us, besides Christ? *Job xxviii. 13. Where shall wisdom be found? The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me.* Let me allude, Where shall salvation be found? The angel saith, It is not in me; Morality saith, It is not in me; the Ordinance saith, It is not in me: Christ alone is the well-spring of life; the Ordinance is the

conduit-pipe that conveys salvation, but Christ is the spring that feeds it, *Neither is there salvation in any other.*

2. Sometimes Christ is called a Redeemer, *Isa. lix. 20. The Redeemer shall come to Sion.* Some understand it of *Cyrus*, others of an angel; but the most ancient Jewish Doctors understand it of Christ the Redeemer of the Elect: *Job xix. 25. My Redeemer liveth.* The Hebrew word for Redeemer, signifies such an one as is near a-kin, and hath right to redeem a mortgage; so Christ is near of kin to us, being our elder brother, therefore hath the best right to redeem us.

3. Christ is called a Mediator in the text, *Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant.* The Greek word for Mediator, signifies a middle person, one that doth make up the breach between two disagreeing parties. God and we were at variance by sin, now Christ doth mediate and umpire between us; he reconciles us to God through his blood, therefore he is called the Mediator of the new covenant. There is no way of communion and intercourse between God and man, but in and through a Mediator: Christ takes away the enmity in us, and the wrath in God, and so makes peace. Nor is Christ only a Mediator of reconciliation, but intercession. *Heb. ix. 24. Christ is entered, not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* The priest, when he had slain the sacrifice, was to go with the blood before the altar and mercy-seat, and show it to the Lord. Now,



Now, in Christ our Mediator, consider two things. (1.) His person. (2.) His graces.

1<sup>st</sup>, His person: His person is amiable, he is all made up of love and beauty. He is the effigies of his Father, *Heb. i. 3. The express image of his person.* Consider,

(1.) Christ's person in two natures:

(2.) His two natures in one person.

(1.) Christ's person in two natures: 1. Look upon his human nature as incarnate. The *Valentinians* deny his human nature; but *John i. 14. The Word was made flesh*: 'Tis spoken of Christ the promised Messiah. Christ took our flesh, that the same nature which sinned might suffer; and *The Word was made flesh*, that through the glass of his human nature we might look upon God.

Qu. *Why is Christ called the Word?*

Ans. Because, as a word is the interpreter of the mind, and reveals what is in a man's breast; so Jesus Christ reveals his Father's mind to us, concerning the great matters of our salvation, *John i. 18.* Were it not for Christ's manhood, the sight of the Godhead would be formidable to us: But thro' Christ's flesh we may look upon God without terror. And Christ took our flesh, that he might know how to pity us; he knows what it is to be faint, sorrowful, tempted, *Psal. ciii. 14. He knows our frame.* And he took our flesh, that he might (as *Austin* saith) enoble our human nature with honour. Christ having married our flesh, hath exalted it above the angelical nature.

2. Look upon Christ's divine nature. Christ may be fitly compared to *Jacob's ladder*, *Gen. xxviii. 12.* which reacheth from earth to heaven: Christ's human nature was the foot of the ladder, which stood upon earth; his divine nature the top of the ladder, which reacheth to heaven. This being a grand article of our faith, I shall amplify: I know the *Arians*, *Socinians*, *Ebionites* would rob Christ of the best jewel of his crown, his Godhead; but the *Apostolical*, *Nicene*, *Athanasian Creed*, affirm Christ's Deity; to this the churches of *Helvetia*, *Bohemia*, *Whittenberg*, *Transylvania*, &c. give their full consent; and the Scripture is clear for it. He is called the mighty God, *Isa. ix. 6. And in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead*, *Col. ii. 9.* He is of the same nature and essence with the Father. So *Athanasius*, *Basil*, *Chrysostom*. 1. Is God the Father called Almighty? so is Christ, *Rev. i. 8. The Almighty.* 2. Is God

the Father the heart-searcher? so is Christ, *John ii. 25. He knows their thoughts.* 3. Is God the Father omnipresent? so is Christ, *John iii. 13. The Son of Man which is in heaven.* Christ as God was then in heaven, when as man he was upon the earth.

Qu. *Is God eternal?*

Ans. Christ is the everlasting Father. *Isa. ix. 6.* which Scripture may be urged against the *Cerinthian* hereticks, who denied the pre-existence of Christ's Godhead, and held that Christ had no being till he derived it from the Virgin *Mary*.

4. Doth divine worship belong to the first person in the Trinity? so it doth to Christ, *John v. 23. Heb. i. 6. Let all the Angels of God worship him.* 5. Is creation proper to the Deity? this is a flower of Christ's crown, *Col. i. 16. By him were all things created.* 6. Is invocation proper to the Deity? this is given to Christ, *Acts vii. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* 7. Is recumbency and trust peculiar to God the Father? this is given to Christ, *John xiv. 1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Christ must needs be God, not only that the divine nature might support the human from sinking under God's wrath, but also to give value and weight to his sufferings.

Christ being God, his death and passion is meritorious; Christ's blood is called *sanguis Dei*, the blood of God, *Acts xx. 28.* because the person who was offered in sacrifice was God as well as man. This is an invincible support to believers; it was God who was offended, and it was God who satisfied. Thus Christ's person in two natures.

(2.) Consider Christ's two natures in one person, *God-man*, 1 *Tim. iii. 16. God manifest in the flesh.* Christ had a twofold substance, divine and human; yet not a twofold subsistence, both natures make but one Christ: A fiens may be grafted into another tree, a pear-tree into an apple, which, tho' it bear different fruits, is but one tree; so Christ's manhood is united to the Godhead in an ineffable manner; yet tho' here are two natures, yet but one person. This union of the two natures in Christ was not by transmutation, the divine nature changed into the human, or the human into the divine; nor by mixture, the two natures mingled together, as wine and water are mixed: both the natures of Christ remain distinct, yet make not two distinct persons, but one person;

son; the human nature not God, yet one with God.

3dly, Consider Christ our Mediator in his graces: these are the sweet savour of his ointments, that make the virgins love him. Christ our blessed Mediator is said to be full of *grace and truth*, John i. 14. He had the anointing of the spirit without measure, John iii. 34. Grace in Christ is after a more eminent and glorious manner than it is in any of the Saints.

1. Jesus Christ our Mediator hath perfection in every grace, Col. i. 19. He is a panoply, magazine and store-house of all heavenly treasure, all fulness: This no saint on earth hath; he may excel in one grace, but not in all; as *Abraham* was eminent for faith, *Moses* for meekness; but Christ excels in every grace.

2. There is a never-failing fulness of Grace in Christ: grace in the saints is ebbing and flowing, it is not always in the same degree and proportion; at one time *David's* faith was strong, at another time so faint and weak, that you could hardly feel any pulse, *Psal. xxxi. 22. I said, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* But grace in Christ is a never-failing fulness, it did never abate in the least degree, he never lost a drop of his holiness. What was said of *Joseph*, may more truly be applied to Christ, *Gen. xlix. 23. The archers shot at him, but his bow abode in strength*: Men and devils shot at him, but his grace remained in its full vigour and strength; *His bow abode in strength.*

3. Grace in Christ is communicative, his grace is for us: the holy oil of the spirit was poured on the head of this blessed *Aaron*, that it might run down upon us: The Saints have not grace to bestow on others: When the foolish virgins would have bought oil of their neighbour virgins, *Matth. xxv. 9. Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out*; The wise virgins answered, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.* The saints have no grace to spare to others; but Christ diffuseth his grace to others. Grace in the saints is as water in the vessel, grace in Christ is as water in the spring, *John i. 16. Of his fulness have we received grace for grace.* Set a glass under a Mill or limbeck, and it receives water from the limbeck drop by drop: so the saints have the drops and influences of Christ's grace distilling upon them. What a rich consolation is this to those who either have no grace, or their stock is but low! They may go to Christ the Mediator, as to a treasury of grace: Lord,

I am indigent; but whither shall I carry my empty vessel, but to a full fountain? *Pf. lxxxvii. 7.* all my fresh springs are in thee; I am guilty, thou hast blood to pardon me; I am polluted, thou hast grace to cleanse me; I am sick unto death, thou hast the *balm of Gilead* to heal me, *Gen. xli. 56. Joseph* opened all the store-houses of corn: Christ is our *Joseph*, that opens all the treasures and all the store-houses of grace, and communicates to us. He is not only sweet as the honey-comb, but drops as the honey-comb: this is a great comfort, in Christ our Mediator there is a *cornucopia*, and fulness of all grace; and Christ is desirous that we should come to him for grace, like the full breast that akes till it be drawn.

*Use 1.* Admire the glory of this Mediator: he is God-man, he is co-essentially glorious with the Father. All the *Jews* that saw Christ in the flesh, did not see his Godhead; all that saw the man did not see the *Messiah*; the temple of *Salomon* within was embellished with gold; travellers, as they passed along, might see the outside of the temple, but only the priests saw the glory which sparkled within the temple; only believers, who are made priests unto God, *Rev. i. 6.* see Christ's glorious inside, the Godhead shining thro' the manhood.

*Use 2.* If Christ be God-man in one person, then look unto Jesus Christ alone for salvation. There must be something of the Godhead to fasten our hope upon; in Christ there's Godhead and manhood hypostatically united. If we could weep rivers of tears, out-fast *Moses* on the mount, if we were exact moralists, touching the law blameless, if we could arrive at the highest degree of sanctification in this life, all this would not save us, without looking to the merits of him who is God; our perfect holiness in heaven is not the cause of our salvation, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. To this therefore did *Paul* flee, as to the horns of the altar, *Philip. iii. 9. That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness*: It is true, we may look to our graces as evidences of salvation, but to Christ's blood only as the cause. In the time of *Noah's* flood, all that trusted to the high hills and trees, and not to the ark, were drowned, *Heb. xii. 2. Looking unto Jesus*; and so look unto him, as to believe in him, that so Christ may not only be united to our nature, but to our persons, *John xx. 31. That believing, you may have life throw his name.*



*Use 3.* Is Jesus Christ God and man in one person? This, as it shews the dignity of believers, that they are nearly related to one of the greatest persons that is, *Col. ii. 9. In him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; so it is of unspeakable comfort. Christ's two natures being married together, the divine and human; all that Christ in either of his natures can do for believers, he will do: In his human nature he prays for them, in his divine nature he merits

for them. This for the person of our Mediator.

*Use 4.* Admire the love of Christ our Mediator! that he should humble himself, and take our flesh, that he might redeem us. Believers should put Christ in their bosom, as the spouse did, *Cant. i. 13. Ly betwixt my breasts*. What was said of *Ignatius*, that the name of *Jesus* was found written in his heart, should be verified of every saint, he should have Jesus Christ written in his heart.



## CHRIST A PROPHEET.

DEUT. xviii. 15. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, &c.*

HAVING spoken of the person of Christ, we are next to speak of the offices of Christ, Prophetical, Priestly, Regal.

1. Prophetical, *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet. Enunciatur hic locus de Christo*, 'Tis spoken of Christ. There are several names given to Christ as a Prophet: He is called *the Counsellor*, *Isa. vi. 9. In uno Christo Angelus fœderis completur*, *Fagius. The Angel of the Covenant*, *Mal. iii. 1. A Lamp*, *2 Sam. xxii. 29. The bright Morning-star*, *Rev. xxii. 16. Jesus Christ is the great Prophet of his church*; the woman of *Samaria* gave a shrewd guess, *John iv. 19. He is the best teacher*, he makes all other teaching effectual, *Luke xxiv. 45. Then opened he their understanding*. He did not only open the scriptures, but opened their understanding: He teacheth to profit, *Isa. xlviii. 17. I am the Lord thy God, who teacheth thee to profit*.

Qu. *How Christ teacheth?*

Ans. 1. Externally, by his word, *Pf. cxix. 105. Thy word is a lamp to my feet*. Such as pretend to have a light or revelation above the word, or contrary to it, never had their teaching from Christ, *Isa. viii. 20*.

2. Christ teacheth these sacred mysteries, inwardly, by the spirit, *John xvi. 13. The world knows not what it is, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them*. He knows not what it is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, *Rom. xii. 2*. or what the inward workings of the spirit mean; these are riddles and paradoxes to him. He may have more insight into the

things of the world than a believer, but he doth not see the deep things of God. A swine may see an acorn under the tree, but he cannot see a star; he who is taught of Christ, sees the *arcana imperii*, the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

Qu. *What are the lessons Christ teacheth?*

Ans. 1. He teacheth us to see into our own hearts. Take the most mercurial wits, the greatest politicians, that understand the mysteries of state, yet they know not the mysteries of their own hearts, they cannot believe there is that evil in them as is, *2 Kings viii. 13. Is thy servant a dog? Grande profundum est homo*, *Aug.* The heart is a great deep, which is not easily fathomed. But Christ when he teacheth, removes the veil of ignorance; and lights a man into his own heart: And now he sees swarms of vain thoughts, he blusheth to see how sin mingles with his duties, his stars are mixed with clouds; he prays, as *Austin*, that God would deliver him from himself.

2. The second lesson Christ teacheth, is the *vanity* of the creature. A natural man sets up his happiness here, worships the golden image; but he that Christ hath anointed with his eyesalve, hath a spirit of discerning; he looks upon the creature in its night-dress, sees it to be empty and unsatisfying, not commensurate to an heaven-born soul. *Solomon* had put all the creatures into a limbeck, and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, all was *vanity*, *Eccl. ii. 11*. The Apostle calls it a *show* or *apparition*, *1 Cor. vii. 31. having no intrinsic goodfiness*.

3. The

3. The third lesson is the *excellency* of things unseen. Christ gives the soul a sight of glory, a prospect of eternity, 2 Cor. iv. 18. *We look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen.* Moses saw him who is *invisible*, Heb. xi. 27. And the Patriarchs saw a better country, viz: an heavenly, Heb. xi. 16. where delights of angels, rivers of pleasure, the flower of joy, fully ripe and blown.

Qu. *How doth Christ's teaching differ from other teaching?*

Ans. Several ways.

1. Christ teacheth the *heart*. Others may teach the ear, Christ the heart, Acts xvi. 14. *Whose heart the Lord opened.* All that the dispensers of the word can do, is but to work knowledge, Christ works grace; they can but give you the light of the truth, Christ gives you the love of the truth; they can only teach you *what* to believe, Christ teacheth *how* to believe.

2. Christ gives us a *Taste* of the word. Ministers may set the food of the word before you, and carve it out to you; but it is only Christ causeth you to taste it, 1 Pet. ii. 3. *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* Psal. xxxiv. 8. *Taste and see that the Lord is good.* It is one thing to hear a truth preached, another thing to taste it; one thing to read a promise, another thing to taste it. David had got a taste of the word, Psal. cxix. 120. 103. *Thou hast taught me: How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.* The Apostle calls it savour of knowledge, 2 Cor. ii. 14. The light of knowledge is one thing, the savour another. Christ makes us taste a favoriness in the word.

3. Christ, when he teacheth, makes us obey. Others may instruct, but cannot command obedience: they teach to be humble, but men remain proud. The Prophet had been denouncing judgments against the people of Judah, but they would not hear, Jer. xlv. 17. *We will do whatsoever goeth out of our own mouth, to bake cakes to the queen of heaven.* Men come *quasi* armed in coat of mail, that the sword of the word will not enter; but when Christ comes to teach, he removes this obstinacy; he not only informs the judgment, but inclines the will. He doth not only come with the light of his word, but the rod of his strength, and makes the stubborn sinner yield to him: His grace is irresistible.

4. Christ teacheth *easily*. Others teach with

*difficulty*. Difficulty in finding out a truth, and in inculcating it, Isa. xxviii. 10. *Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line.* Some may teach all their lives, and the word take no impression: They complain, as Isa. xlix. 4. *I have spent my labour in vain; plow on rocks:* But Christ the great Prophet teacheth with *ease*. He can with the least touch of his spirit convert; he can say, *Let there be light*; with a word he conveys grace.

5. Christ, when he teacheth, makes men willing to learn. Men may teach others, but they have no mind to learn, Prov. i. 7. *Fools despise instruction*; they rage at the word, as if a patient should rage at the physician, when he brings him a cordial; thus backward are men to their own salvation. But Christ makes his people a *willing people*, Psal. cx. 3. They prize knowledge, and hang it as a jewel upon their ear. Those that Christ teacheth, say, as Isa. ii. 3. *Come let us go to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in them*; and, as Acts x. 33. *We are here present before God, to hear all things commanded.*

6. Christ, when he teacheth, doth not only illuminate, but animate. He doth so teach, as he doth quicken, John viii. 12. *I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall have lumen vitæ, the light of life.* By nature we are dead, therefore unfit for teaching; who will make an oration to the dead? But Christ teacheth them that are dead, he gives the light of life. As when Lazarus was dead, Christ said, *Come forth*, and he made the dead to hear, Lazarus come forth: So when Christ saith to the dead soul, come forth of the grave of unbelief, he hears Christ's voice, and comes forth, it is the light of life. The philosophers say, *calor & lux concresecunt*, light and heat encrease together. 'Tis true here, where Christ comes with his light, there is the heat of spiritual life going along with it.

Use 1. Of Information. Branch 1. See here an argument of Christ's divinity: had he not been God, he could never have known the mind of God, or revealed to us these *arcana cæli*, those deep mysteries which no man or angel could find out. Who but God can anoint the eyes of the blind? and give not only light, but sight? who but he, who hath the key of David, can open the heart? who but God can bow the iron sinew of the will? He



only who is God can enlighten the conscience, and make the stony heart bleed.

*Branch 2.* See what a *cornucopia*, or plenty of wisdom is in Christ, who is the great doctor of his church, and gives saving knowledge to all the elect. The body of the sun must needs be full of clarity and brightness, which enlightens the whole world: Christ is the great luminary; in him are hid all treasures of knowledge, *Col. ii. 3.* The middle lamp of the sanctuary gave light to all the other lamps: Christ diffuseth his glorious light to others. We are apt to admire the learning of *Aristotle* and *Plato*; alas! what is this poor spark of light to that which is in Christ, from whose infinite wisdom both men and angels light their lamp.

*Branch 3.* See the misery of man in the state of nature. Before Christ come to be their prophet, they are enveloped with ignorance and darkness. Men know nothing in a salvific, sanctified manner, they know nothing as they ought to know, *1 Cor. viii. 2.* This is sad: 1. Men in the dark cannot discern colours; so in the state of nature they cannot discern between morality and grace; they take one for the other, *pro dea nubem.* 2. In the dark the greatest beauty is hid: let there be rare flowers in the garden, and pictures in the room, yet in the dark their beauty is veiled over; so, though there be such transcendent beauty in Christ as amazeth the angels, a man in the state of nature sees none of this beauty. What is Christ to him? or heaven to him? The *veil is upon their heart.* 3. A man in the dark is in danger every step he goes; so a man in the state of nature is in danger, every step of falling into hell. Thus it is before Christ teacheth us; nay, the darkness in which a sinner is, while in an unregenerate state, is worse than natural darkness; for natural darkness affrights, *Gen. xv. 12.* *An horror of great darkness fell upon Abraham.* But the spiritual darkness is not accompanied with horror, men tremble not at their condition; nay, they like their condition well enough, *John iii. 19.* *Men loved darkness.* This is their sad condition, till *Jesus Christ* comes as a prophet to teach them, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of *satan* to God.

*Branch 4.* See the happy condition of the children of God, they have Christ to be their prophet, *Isa. liv. 13.* *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord,* *1 Cor. i. 30.* *He is made to us wisdom.* One man cannot see by another's eye; but believers see with Christ's eyes, in his

light they see light: Christ gives them the light of grace and light of glory.

*Use 2.* Labour to have Christ for your prophet: he teacheth savingly; he is an *interpreter of a thousand*, he can untie those knots which puzzle the very angels. Till Christ teach, never learn any lesson; till Christ is made to us wisdom, we shall never be wile to salvation.

*Qu. What shall we do to have Christ for our teacher?*

*Ans.* See your need of Christ's teaching; you cannot see your way without this morning-star; some speak much of the light of reason improved: alas! the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom the deep of things of God: the light of reason will no more help a man to believe, than the light of a candle will help him to understand. A man can no more, by the power of nature, reach Christ, than an infant can reach the top of the pyramids, or the Ostridge fly up to the stars; see your need of Christ's anointing and teaching, *Rev. iii. 18.*

*2dly. Go to Christ to teach you, Ps. xxv. 5.* *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.* As one of his disciples said, *Lord teach us to pray,* *Luke xi. 1.* so Lord, teach me to profit. Do thou light my lamp, O thou great prophet of thy church! Give me a *spirit of wisdom and revelation*, that I may see things in another manner than ever I saw them before; teach me in the word to hear thy voice, and in the sacrament to discern thy body, *Pf. xliii. 3.* *Lighten mine eyes, &c. Cathedral habet in celo qui corda docet in terra,* Aug. He hath his pulpit in heaven who converts souls. And that we may be encouraged to go to Christ our great prophet.

1. *Jesus Christ* is very willing to teach us. Why else did he enter into the calling of the ministry, but to teach the mysteries of heaven? *Mat. iv. 23.* *Jesus went about teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.* Why did he take the office prophetic upon him? Why was Christ so angry with them that kept away the *key of knowledge*, *Luke xi. 52.* Why was Christ anointed with the *spirit without measure*? but that he might anoint us with knowledge. Knowledge is in Christ, as milk in the breast for the child. O then go to Christ to teach. None in the gospel came to Christ for sight, but he restored their eye-sight; and sure Christ is more willing to work a cure upon a blind soul, than ever he was upon a blind body.

2. There

2. There are none so dull and ignorant but *Christ can teach them*. Every one is not fit to make a philosopher's scholar of; *ex omni lingua nan fit Mercurius*; but there is none so dull, but Christ can make a good scholar of such as are ignorant, and of low parts. Christ teacheth them in such a manner, that they know more than the great sages and wise men of the world. Hence that saying of St. *Augustine*, *surgunt indocti, & rapiunt cælum*; the unlearned men rise up, and take heaven; they know the truths of Christ more savingly than the great admired rabbies. The duller the scholar, the more is his skill seen that teacheth. Hence it is, Christ delights in teaching the ignorant, to get himself more glory, *Isa. xxxv. 5. The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped*. Who would go to teach a blind or a deaf man? Yet such dull scholars Christ teacheth. Such as are blinded with ignorance, they shall see the mysteries of the gospel, and the deaf ears shall be unstopped.

3. Wait upon the means of Grace which Christ hath appointed. Though Christ teacheth by his spirit, yet he teacheth in the use of ordinances. Wait at the gates of wisdom's door; ministers are teachers under Christ, *Eph. iv. 11. Pastors and teachers*. We read of pitchers and lamps within the pitchers, *Judges vii. 16*. Ministers are earthen vessels, but these pitchers have lamps within them to light souls to heaven. Christ is said to speak to us from heaven now, *Heb. xii. 25. viz. by his ministers*, as the king speaks by his ambassador. Such as wear themselves from the breast of ordinances, seldom thrive; either they grow light in their head,

or lame in their feet. The word preached is Christ's voice in the mouth of the minister; and they that refuse to hear Christ speaking in the ministry, Christ will refuse to hear them speaking on their death-bed.

4. If you would have the teachings of Christ, walk according to that knowledge which you have already. Use your little knowledge well, and Christ will teach you more, *John vii. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*. A master seeing his servant improve a little stock well, gives him more to trade with.

Use. 3. If you have been taught by Christ savingly, be thankful: it is your honour to have God for your teacher, and that he should teach you, and not others, is matter of admiration and gratulation. O how many knowing men are ignorant! They are not taught of God; they have Christ's word to enlighten them, but not his spirit to sanctify them. But that you should have the inward as well as the outward teaching, that Christ should anoint you with the heavenly unction of his spirit, that you can say as he, *John ix. 25. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see*: O how thankful should you be to Christ, who hath revealed his father's bosom-secrets unto you! *John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him*. If *Alexander* thought himself so much obliged to *Aristotle*, for the philosophical instructions he learned from him; O how are we bound to Jesus Christ, this great prophet, for opening to us the eternal purposes of his love, and revealing to us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven!

## CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

Q. XV. **H**OW doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

Ans. In his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

HEB. ix. 26. Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Q. What are the parts of Christ's priestly office?

Ans. Christ's priestly office hath two parts, his satisfaction and intercession.

I. His SATISFACTION, and this consists of two branches: 1. His *active obedience*, Mat. iii. 15. *He fulfilled all righteousness*. Christ did every thing which the law required; his holy life was a perfect commentary upon the law of God; and he obeyed the law for us.

2. His *passive obedience*. Our guilt being transferred and imputed to him, he did undergo the penalty which was due to us: *he appeared*



to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The paschal lamb slain, was a type of Christ who was offered up in sacrifice for us. Sin could not be done away without blood, *Heb. ix. 22. Without blood is no remission.* Christ was not only a lamb without spot, but a lamb slain.

*Qu. Why was it requisite there should be a priest?*

*Ans.* There needed a priest to be an umpire, to mediate between a guilty creature, and an holy God.

*Qu. How could Christ suffer, being God?*

*Ans.* Christ suffered only in the human nature.

*Qu. But if only Christ's humanity suffered, how could this suffering satisfy for sin?*

*Ans.* The human nature being united to the divine, the human nature did suffer, the divine did satisfy. Christ's Godhead, as it did support the human nature that it did not faint, so it did give virtue to his sufferings. The altar sanctifies the thing offered on it, *Mat. xxiii. 19.* so the altar of Christ's divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of his death, and made it of infinite value.

*Qu. Wherein doth the greatness of Christ's sufferings appear?*

*Ans.* In the sufferings of his body. He suffered truly, not only in appearance; the apostle calls it *mors crucis*, the death of the cross, *Phil. ii. 8.* Tully, when he speaks of this kind of death, *quid dicam in crucem tollere?* Though he was a great orator, he wanted words to express it. The thoughts of this made Christ sweat great drops of blood in the garden, *Luke xxii. 44.* It was an ignominious, painful, cursed death; Christ suffered in all his senses: 1. In his eyes; they beheld two sad objects, he saw his enemies insulting, and his mother weeping. 2. In his ears; his ears were filled with the revilings of the people, *Mat. xxvii. 42.* *He saved others, himself he cannot save.* 3. In his smell; when their drivel fell upon his face. 4. In his taste; when they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, bitterness and sharpness. 5. In his feeling; his head suffered with thorns, his hands and feet with the nails, --- *Totum pro vulnere corpus*: now was this white lily dyed of a purple-colour. (2.) In the sufferings of his soul. He was pressed in the wine-press of his father's wrath. This caused that vociferation and out-cry on the cross, *my God, my God, cur deseruisti?* Christ suffered a double eclipse upon the cross, an eclipse of the sun, and an eclipse of the light

of God's countenance. How bitter was this agony! the evangelists use three words to express it, *he began to be amazed*, *Mark xiv. 33.* *He began to be faint.* *To be exceeding sorrowful*, *Mat. xxvi. 37.* Christ felt the pains of hell in his soul, though not locally, yet equivalently.

*Qu. Why did Christ suffer?*

*Ans.* Surely not for any desert of his own, *Dan. ix. 26.* *The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself*; it was for us, *Isa. liii. 6.* *Unus peccat, alius plebitur*; he suffered, that he might satisfy God's justice for us. We, by our sins, had infinitely wronged God; and, could we have shed rivers of tears, offered up millions of holocausts and burnt-offerings, we could never have pacified an angry Deity; therefore Christ must die, that God's justice may be satisfied.

It is hotly debated among divines, whether God could not have forgiven sin freely without a sacrifice. Not to dispute what God could have done, but when we consider God was resolved to have the law satisfied, and to have man saved in a way of justice as well as mercy; then, I say, it was necessary that Christ should lay down his life as a sacrifice.

1. To fulfil the predictions of scripture, *Luke xxiv. 46.* *Thus it behoved Christ to suffer.*

2. To bring us into favour with God: It is one thing for a traitor to be pardoned, and another thing to be made a favourite. Christ's blood is not only called a sacrifice whereby God is appeased, but a propitiation whereby God becomes gracious and friendly to us. Christ is our mercy-seat, from which God gives answers of peace to us.

Christ died, that he might make good his last-will and testament with his blood: there were many legacies which Christ bequeathed to believers, which had been all null and void, had not he died, and by his death confirmed the will, *Heb. ix. 17.* A testament is in force after men are dead: the mission of the spirit, the promises, those legacies, were not in force till Christ's death; but Christ by his blood hath sealed them, and believers may lay claim to them.

4. He died, that he might purchase for us glorious mansions; therefore heaven is called not only a promised, but a purchased possession, *Eph. i. 14.* Christ died for our preferment; he suffered that we might reign; he hung upon the cross, that we might sit upon the throne. Heaven was shut, &c. *crux Christi clavis Paradisi*: the cross of Christ is the ladder by which we ascend to Heaven. His crucifixion is our coronation.



*Use 1.* In the bloody sacrifice of Christ, see the horrid nature of sin; sin (it is true) is odious, as it banished Adam out of paradise, and threw the angels into hell; but that which doth most of all make it appear horrid, is this, that it made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood. We should look upon sin with indignation, and pursue it with an holy malice, and shed the blood of those which shed Christ's blood. The sight of *Cesar's* bloody robe, incensed the *Romans* against them that slew him. The sight of Christ's bleeding body should incense us against sin: let us not parly with it; let not that be our joy, which made Christ a man of sorrow.

*Use 2.* Is Christ our priest sacrificed? See God's mercy and justice displayed. I may say as the apostle, *Rom. xi. 27. Behold the goodness and severity of God.* 1. The goodness of God in providing a sacrifice: had not Christ suffered upon the cross, we must have lain in hell for ever, satisfying God's justice.

2. The severity of God: though it were his own son, the son of his love, and our sins were imputed to him, yet God did not spare him, *Rom. viii. 32.* but his wrath did flame against him. And if God were thus severe to his own son, how dreadful will he be one day to his enemies? Such as die in wilful impenitency, must feel the same wrath as Christ did; and because they cannot bear it at once, therefore they must be enduring it for ever.

*Use 3.* Is Christ our priest, who was sacrificed for us? Then see the endeared affection of Christ to us sinners. The cross (saith *Austin*) was a pulpit, in which Christ preached his love to the world. That Christ should die, was more than if all the angels had been turned to dust; and that Christ should die as a malefactor, having the weight of all mens sins laid upon him; that he should die for his enemies, *Rom. v. 10.* The balm-tree weeps out its precious balm to heal those that cut and mangle it: Christ shed his blood to heal those that crucified him. And that he should die freely; it is called the offering of the body of Jesus, *Heb. x. 10.* And though his sufferings were so great, that they made him sigh, and weep, and bleed; yet they could not make him repent, *Isa. liii. 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.* Christ had hard travel upon the cross, yet he doth not repent of it, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees redemption brought forth to the world. O infinite amazing love of Christ! a love that passeth knowledge? *Eph. iii.*

19. that neither man or angel can parallel. How should we be affected with this love? If *Saul* was so affected with *David's* kindness in sparing his life, how should we be affected with Christ's kindness in parting with his life for us? At Christ's death and passion, the very stones did cleave asunder, *Mat. xxvii. 5. The rocks rent.* Not to be affected with Christ's love in dying, is to have hearts harder than the rocks.

*Use 4.* Is Christ our sacrifice? Then see the excellency of his sacrifice. 1. It is perfect, *Heb. x. 14. By one offering, he hath perfected them that are sanctified.* Therefore, how impious are the papists, in joining their merits and the prayers of saints, with Christ's sacrifice? They offer him up daily in the mass, as if Christ's sacrifice on the cross were imperfect; this is a blasphemy against Christ's priestly office.

2. Christ's sacrifice, is meritorious; he not only died our example, but to merit salvation: the person who suffered, being God as well as man, did put virtue into his sufferings; and now our sins are expiated, and God appeased. No sooner did the messengers say, *Uriah is dead;* but *David's* anger was pacified, *2. Sam. xi. 21.* No sooner did Christ die, but God's anger is pacified.

3. This Sacrifice is beneficial. Out of the dead lion *Samson* had hony: it procures justification of our persons, acceptance of our service, access to God with boldness, entrance into the holy place of heaven, *Heb. x. 19. Per latus Christi patefcit nobis in cœlum,* *Israel* passed through the Red-sea to Canaan; so through the Red-sea of Christ's blood, we enter into the heavenly Canaan.

2. *Use of exhortation.* Branch 1. Let us fiducially apply this blood of Christ: all the virtue of a medicine is in the applying; though the medicine be made of the blood of God, it will not heal, unless by faith applied. As fire is to the chymist, so is faith to the Christian, the chymist can do nothing without fire, so there is nothing done without faith. Faith makes Christ's sacrifice ours, *Phil. iii. 8. Christ Jesus my Lord.* It is not gold in the mine that enricheth, but gold in the hand: faith is the hand receives Christ's golden merits. It is not a cordial in the glass refresheth the spirit, but a cordial drunk down. *Per fidem Christi sanguinem sugimus,* *Cypr.* Faith opens the orifice of Christ's wounds, and drinks the precious cordial of his blood. Without faith Christ himself will not avail us.

Branch 2.



*Branch 2.* Let us love a *bleeding Saviour*, and let us show our love to Christ, by being ready to suffer for him. Many rejoice at Christ's suffering for them, but dream not of their suffering for him: *Joseph* dreamed of his preferment, but not of his imprisonment. Was Christ a sacrifice? Did he bear God's wrath for us? We should bear man's wrath for him. Christ's death was voluntary, *Pf. xl. 7. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, Luke xii. 50. I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished?* Christ calls his sufferings a baptism; he was to be (as it were) baptized in his own blood; and how did he thirst for that time? *How am I straitned!* Oh then, let us be willing to suffer for Christ! Christ hath taken away the venom and sting of the saints sufferings: there is no wrath in their cup. Our sufferings Christ can make sweet. As there was oil mixed in the peace-offering, so God can mix the oil of gladness with our sufferings. *The ringing of my chain is sweet music in my ears, landgrave of Hesse.* Life must be parted with shortly; what is it to part with it a little sooner, as a sacrifice to Christ, as a seal of sincerity, and a pledge of thankfulness?

*3d. Use, of consolation.* This sacrifice of Christ's blood may infinitely comfort us. This is the *blood of atonement*: Christ's cross is *cardo salutis*, *Calv. The hinge and fountain of our comfort. 1st.* This blood comforts in *case of guilt*: O, saith the soul, my sins trouble me! why, Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sin, *Mat. xxvi. 28.* Let us see our sins laid on Christ, and then they are no more *ours*, but *his*.

*2dly, In case of pollution*: Christ's blood is an *healing and cleansing blood. 1. It is healing, Isa. liii. 5. With his stripes we are healed.* It is the best weapon-salve, it heals at a *distance*: Though Christ be in heaven, we may feel the virtue of his blood healing our bloody issue. *2. And it is cleansing*: It is therefore compared to fountain-water, *Zech. xiii. 1.* The word is a glass to show us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away; it turns le-

prosy into purity, *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all our sin.* There is indeed one spot so black, that Christ's blood doth not wash away, *viz. the sin against the holy Ghost.* Not but that there is virtue enough in Christ's blood to wash it away; but he who hath sinned that sin will not be washed, he contemns Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot, *Heb. x. 29.* Thus we see what a strong cordial Christ's blood is; it is the anchor-hold of our faith, the spring of our joy, the crown of our desires, and the only support both in life and death. In all our fears let us comfort ourselves with the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood: Christ died both as a *purchaser* and as a *conqueror. 1. As a purchaser*, in regard of God, having by his blood obtained our salvation. *2. And as a conqueror*, in regard of satan, the cross being his triumphant chariot, wherein he hath led hell and death captive.

*Use ult.* Bless God for this precious sacrifice of Christ's death, *Pf. ciii. 1. Bless the Lord, O my soul.* And for what doth *David* bless him? *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.* Christ gave himself a sin-offering for us, let us give ourselves a thank-offering to him. If a man redeem another out of debt, will not he be grateful? How deeply do we stand obliged to Christ, who hath redeemed us from hell and damnation? *Rev. v. 9. And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* Let our hearts and tongues join in consort to bless God, and let us shew thankfulness to Christ by fruitfulness; let us bring forth (as spice trees) the fruits of humility, zeal, good works. This is to live unto him who died for us, *2 Cor. v. 15.* The wise men did not only worship Christ, but presented him with gifts, gold and frankincense, and myrrhe, *Mat. ii. 11.* Let us present Christ with the fruits of righteousness, which are unto the glory and praise of God.

## CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

ROM. viii. 34. *Who also maketh intercession for us.*

**W**HEN Aaron entered into the holy place, his bells gave a sound : so Christ having entered into heaven, his intercession makes a melodious sound in the ears of God. Christ, tho' he be exalted to glory, hath not laid aside his bowels of compassion, but is still mindful of his body mystical ; as Joseph was mindful of his father and brethren, when he was exalted to the court. *Who also maketh intercession for us*---To interceed, is to make request in the behalf of another. Christ is the great master of requests in heaven ; *Christus est catholicus Patris Sacerdos*, Tertul.

*Qu. What are the qualifications of our intercessor ?*

*Ans.* 1. He is holy, *Heb. vii. 26. For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, undefiled, separate from sinners. Christ knew no sin*, 2 Cor. v. 21. He knew sin in weight, not in the act. It was requisite, that he, who was to do away the sins of others should himself be without sin. Holiness is one of the precious stones which shines on the breast-plate of our high-priest.

2. He is faithful, *Heb. ii. 17. It behoved him to be like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful high-priest. Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a son, Heb. iii. 5.* He doth not forget any cause he hath to plead, nor doth he use any deceit in pleading. An ordinary attorney may either leave out some word which might make for the client, or put in a word against him, having received a fee on both sides ; but Christ is true to the cause he pleads : we may leave our matters with him, we may trust our lives and souls in his hand.

3. He never dies. The priests under the law, while their office lived, they themselves died, *Heb. vii. 23. They were not suffered to continue by reason of death : But Christ ever lives to make intercession*, *Heb. vii. 25.* He hath no succession in his priesthood.

*Qu. Who Christ interceeds for ?*

*Ans.* Not for all promiscuously, *John xvii. 9.* but for the elect. The efficacy of Christ's prayer reacheth no further than the efficacy of his blood ; but his blood was shed only for the elect, therefore his prayers only reach them. The high priest went into the sanctuary with the names only of the twelve tribes upon his breast ; so Christ goes into heaven only with the names of the elect upon his breast. Christ interceeds for the weakest believer, *John xvii. 20.* and for all the sins of believers. In the law there were some sins the high priest was neither to offer sacrifice for, nor yet to offer prayer, *Numb. xv. 30. The soul that doth aught presumptuously shall be cut off.* The priest might offer up prayer for sins of ignorance, but not of presumption : but Christ's intercession extends to all the sins of the elect. Of what a bloody colour was *David's sin* ? yet it did not exclude Christ's intercession.

*Qu. What doth Christ in the work of intercession ?*

*Ans.* Three things.

1. He presents the merit of his blood to his Father, and, in the virtue of that price paid, pleads for mercy. The high priest was herein a lively type of Christ ; Aaron was to do four things : 1. Kill the beasts : 2. To enter with the blood into the holy of holies : 3. To sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood : 4. To kindle the incense, and with the smoke of it cause a cloud arise over the mercy-seat ; and so the atonement was made, *Lev. xvi. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.* Christ our high priest did exactly answer to this type : he was offered up in sacrifice, that answers to the priest's killing the bullock : and Christ is gone up into heaven, that answers to the priest's going in to the holy of holies : and he spreads his blood before his Father, that answers to the priest's sprinkling the blood upon the mercy-seat : and he prays to his Father, that for his blood's sake, he would be propitious to sinners ; that answers to the

Q

cloud



cloud of incense going up: and through his intercession God is pacified, that answers to the priest's making atonement.

2. Christ, by his intercession, answers all bills of indictment brought in against the elect. Believers do what they can; sin, and then Satan, accuseth them to God, and conscience accuseth them to themselves: now, Christ, by his intercession, answers all these accusations, *Rom. viii. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ who maketh intercession for us.* When *Aeschylus* was accused for some impiety, his brother stood up for him, and shewed the magistrates how he had lost his hand in the service of the state, and so obtained his pardon: thus, when Satan accuseth the saints, or the justice of God lays any thing to their charge, Christ shews his own wounds, and by virtue of his bloody sufferings, he answers all the demands and challenges of the law, and counterworks Satan's accusations.

3. Christ, by his intercession, calls for acquittance; Lord, let the sinner be absolved from guilt: and in this sense Christ is called an advocate, *1 John ii. 1.* He requires that the sinner be set free in the court. An advocate differs much from an orator; an orator useth rhetoric to persuade and entreat the judge to shew mercy to another: but an advocate tells the judge what is law. Thus Christ appears in heaven as an advocate, he represents what is law: when God's justice opens the debt-book, Christ opens the law-book: Lord, saith he, thou art a just God, and will not be pacified without blood; lo, here the blood is shed, therefore, in justice, give me a discharge of these distressed creatures: 'tis equal, that the law being satisfied, the sinner should be acquitted. And, upon Christ's plea, God sets his hand to the sinner's pardon.

Qu. In what manner Christ interceeds?

Ans. 1. *Freely*: he pleads our cause in heaven, and takes no fee. An ordinary lawyer will have his fee, and sometimes a bribe too; but Christ is not mercenary: how many causes doth he plead every day in heaven, and will take nothing? As Christ laid down his life freely, *John x. 15. 18.* so he interceeds freely.

2. *Feelingly*: he is sensible of our condition as his own, *Heb. iv. 15. We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity.* As a tender-hearted mother would plead with a judge for a child ready to

be condemned; O how would her bowels work? how would her tears trickle down? what weeping rhetoric would she use to the judge for mercy? Thus the Lord Jesus is full of sympathy and tenderness, *Heb. ii. 17.* that he might be a merciful high priest: tho' he hath left his passion, yet not his compassion. An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause he pleads, nor doth he care which way it goes; it is profit makes him plead, not affection: But Christ interceeds feelingly: and that which makes him interceed with affection is, it is his own cause which he pleads. He hath shed his blood to purchase life and salvation for the elect; and if they should not be saved, he would lose his purchase.

3. *Efficaciously*: It is a prevailing intercession. Christ never lost any cause he pleaded, he was never non-suited. Christ's intercession must needs be effectual, if you consider,

(1.) The excellency of his person. If the prayer of a saint be so prevalent with God, (*Moses's* prayer did bind God's hands, *Exod. xxxii. 10. Let me alone.* And *Jacob*, as a prince, prevailed with God, *Gen. xxxii. 28.* And *Elijah* did by prayer open and shut heaven, *James v. 17.*) Then what is Christ's prayer? He is the son of God, the son in whom he is well pleased, *Matth. iii. 17.* What will not a Father grant his son? *John xi. 42. I know that thou always hearest me.* If God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a son.

(2.) Christ prays for nothing but what his Father hath a mind to grant. There is but one will between Christ and his Father: Christ prays, *Sanctify them through thy truth*; and, *This is the will of God, even your sanctification*, *1 Thess. iv. 3.* So then, if Christ prays for nothing but what God the Father hath a mind to grant, then he is like to speed.

(3.) Christ prays for nothing but what he hath power to give: what he prays for as he is a man, that he hath power to give as he is God, *John xvii. 24. Father, I will----Father*, there he prays as a man; *I will*, there he gives as God. This is a great comfort to a believer, when his prayer is weak, and he can hardly pray for himself, Christ's prayer in heaven is mighty and powerful. Tho' God may refuse prayer as it comes from us, yet not as it comes from Christ.

4. Christ's intercession is always ready at hand.

**hand.** The people of God have sins of daily incurſion; and, beſides theſe, ſometimes they lapſe into great ſins, and God is provoked, and his juſtice is ready to break forth upon them: But Chriſt's interceſſion is ready at hand, he daily makes up the breaches between God and them; he preſents the merits of his blood to his Father, to pacify him. When the wrath of God began to break out upon *Iſrael*, Aaron preſently ſtepped in with his cenſer, and offered incenſe, and ſo the plague was ſtayed, *Numb. xvi. 47.* ſo, no ſooner doth a child of God offend, and God begins to be angry, but immediately Chriſt ſteps in and interceeds: Father, it is my child hath offended; tho' he hath forgotten his duty, thou haſt not loſt thy bowels: O pity him, and let thy anger be turned away from him. Chriſt's interceſſion is ready at hand, and, upon the leaſt failings of the godly, he ſtands up and makes request for them in heaven.

**Qu.** *What are the fruits of Chriſt's interceſſion?*

**Anſ.** 1. *Juſtification.* In juſtification there are two things: 1. Guilt is remitted. 2. Righteouſneſs is imputed, *Jer. xxiii. 6.* *The Lord our righteouſneſs.* We are reputed not only righteous, as the angels, but as Chriſt, having his robes put upon us, *2 Cor. v. 21.* But whence is it that we are juſtified? 'Tis from Chriſt's interceſſion, *Rom. viii. 33, 34.* Lord, ſaith Chriſt, theſe are the perſons I have died for; look upon them as if they had not ſinned, and repute them righteous.

2. *Fruit, The unction of the Spirit,* *1 John ii. 20.* *Ye have an unction from the holy One.* This unction or anointing is nothing elſe but the work of ſanctification in the heart, whereby the ſpirit makes us partake of the divine nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* Such as ſpeak of the Philoſopher's ſtone, ſuppoſe it to have ſuch a property, that when it toucheth the metal, it turns it into gold: Such a property hath the ſpirit of God upon the ſoul, when it toucheth the ſoul, it puts it into a divine nature, it makes it to be holy, and, to reſemble God. The ſanctifying work of the ſpirit is the fruit of Chriſt's interceſſion, *John vii. 39.* *The Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified.* Chriſt being glorified and in heaven, now he prays the Father, and the Father ſends the Spirit, who pours out the holy anointing upon the elect;

3. *Fruit. The purification of our holy things.*

It is Chriſt's work in heaven, not only to preſent his own prayers to his Father, but he prays over our prayers again, *Rev. viii. 3.* *Another angel came, having a golden cenſer, and there was given to him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer it with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar.* This angel was Chriſt; he takes the golden cenſer of his merits, and puts our prayers into this cenſer, and with the incenſe of his interceſſion makes our prayers go up as a ſweet perfume in heaven. It is observable, *Lev. xvi. 16.* *Aaron ſhall make atonement for the holy place.* This was typical, to ſhew that our holy duties need to have atonement made for them. Our beſt ſervices, as they come from us, are mixed with corruption, as wine that taſtes of the caſk, *Iſa. lxiv. 6.* *they are filthy rags;* but Chriſt purifies and ſweetens theſe ſervices, mixing the ſweet odours of his interceſſion with them; and now God accepts and crowns them. What would become of our duties without an high prieſt? Chriſt's interceſſion doth, to our prayers, as the fan to the chaff, it winnows it from the corn; ſo Chriſt winnows out the chaff which intermixeth with our prayers.

4th. *Fruit.* Access with boldneſs unto the throne of grace, *Heb. iv. 16.* We have a great high prieſt that is paſſed into the heavens, let us go; come boldly to the throne of grace; we have a friend at court that ſpeaks a good word for us, and is following our cauſe in heaven, therefore let this animate and encourage us in prayer. We think it too much boldneſs; what? ſuch ſinners as we to come for pardon! we ſhall be denied; this is a ſinful modeſty: did we indeed come in our own name in prayer, it were preſumption, but Chriſt interceeds for us in the force and efficacy of his blood: Now, to be afraid to come to God in prayer, is a diſhonour to Chriſt's interceſſion.

5th. *Fruit.* The ſending the Comforter, *John xiv. 16.* *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter.* The comfort of the ſpirit is diſtinct from the anointing; this comfort is very ſweet, ſweeter than the honey-drops from the comb; it is the manna in the golden pot, it is *vinum in pectore*; a drop of this heavenly comfort is enough to ſweeten a ſea of worldly ſorrow: it is called the *earnest of the Spirit*, *2 Corinth. i. 22.* an earneſt assures one of the whole ſum. The Spirit gives us an earneſt of heaven in our hand. Whence is this comforting work of the Spirit?



Thank *Christ's intercession* for it: *I will pray the Father, and he shall send the Comforter.*

6th. *Fruit.* Perseverance in grace, *John xvii. 11. Keep through thy own name those which thou hast given me.* It is not our prayer, or watchfulness, or grace that keeps us, but it is God's care and manutenance; he holds us, that we do not fall away. And, whence is it God preserves us? It is from Christ's intercession; *Father, keep them.* That prayer of Christ for Peter, is the copy of his prayer now in heaven, *Luke xxii. 32. I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* Peter's faith did fail in some degree, when he denied Christ; but Christ prayed that it might not totally fail. The saints persevere in believing, because Christ perseveres in praying.

7th. *Fruit.* Absolution at the day of judgment. Christ shall judge the world, *John v. 22. God hath committed all judgment to the Son.* Now sure; those that Christ hath so prayed for, he will absolve when he sits upon the bench of judicature. Will Christ condemn those he prays for? Believers are his spouse, will he condemn his spouse?

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See here the constancy of Christ's love to the elect. He did not only die for them, but interceeds for them in heaven; when Christ hath done dying, he hath not done loving: he is now at work in heaven for the saints, he carries their names on his breast, and will never leave praying till that prayer be granted, *John xvii. 24. Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.*

*Branch 2.* See whence it is that the prayers of the saints are so powerful with God. *Jacob, as an angel, prevailed with God: Moses's prayer tyed God's hands; Precibus suis tanquam vinculis ligatum tenuit Deum; Let me alone, Exod. xxxii. 10.* Whence is this? It is Christ's prayer in heaven makes the saints prayers so available. Christ's divine nature is the altar on which he offers up our prayers, so they prevail: prayer, as it comes from the saints, is but weak and languid; but when the arrow of a saint's prayer is put into the bow of Christ's intercession, now it pierceth the throne of grace.

*Branch 3.* It shows where a Christian must chiefly fix his eye when he comes to prayer, viz. on Christ's intercession. We are to look up to the mercy-seat, but to hope for mercy thro' Christ's intercession. We read, *Lev. vi.*

that *Adron* made the atonement as well by the incense as by the blood: We must look to the cloud of incense, viz. the intercession of Christ. Christian, look up to thy advocate, one that God can deny nothing to: a word from Christ's mouth is more, than if all the angels in heaven were interceeding for thee. If a man had a suit depending in the court of chancery, and had a skilful lawyer to plead, this would much encourage him. Christ is now at the court appearing for us, *Heb. ix. 24.* and he hath great potency in heaven; this should much encourage us to look up to him, and hope for audience in prayer. We might indeed be afraid to present our petitions, if we had not Christ to deliver them.

*Branch 4.* The sad condition of an unbeliever; he hath none in heaven to speak a word for him, *John xvii. 9. I pray not for the world;* as good be shut out of heaven, as be shut out of Christ's prayer. Christ pleads for the saints, as queen *Esther* did for the Jews, when they should have been destroyed; *Let my people be given me at my request, Esth. vii. 3.* When the Devil shows the blackness of their sins, Christ shows the redness of his wounds. But how sad is the condition of that man, Christ will not pray for, nay, that he will pray against? As queen *Esther* petitioned against *Haman*, and then his fate was covered, *Esth. vii. 6.* and he was led away to execution. 'Tis sad when the law shall be against the sinner, and conscience, and judge, and no friend to speak a word for him: there's no way then, but, *jayler, take the prisoner.*

*Branch 5.* If Christ makes intercession, then we have nothing to do with other intercessors. The church of *Rome* distinguisheth between mediators of redemption and intercession, and say, the angels do not redeem us, but interceed for us: and pray to them: but Christ only can interceed for us *ex officio.* God hath consecrated him an high priest, *Heb. v. 6. Thou art a priest for ever.* Christ interceeds *vi pretii*, in the virtue of his blood, he pleads his merits to his Father; the angels have no merits to bring to God, therefore can be no intercessors for us: whoever is our advocate must be our propitiation to pacify God, *1 John ii. 1. We have an advocate with the Father. V. 2. And he is our propitiation.* The angels cannot be our propitiation, therefore not our advocates.

2d. *Use of trial.* How shall we know that Christ interceeds for us? They have little ground



ground to think Christ prays for them, who never pray for themselves : well, but how shall we know ?

*Ans. 1.* If Christ be praying for us, then his Spirit is praying in us, *Gal. iv. 6. He hath sent forth his spirit into your heart, crying, Abba, Father ;* and *Rom. viii. 26. the Spirit helps us with sighs and groans ;* not only with gifts but groans. We need not climb up into the firmament to see if the sun be there, we may see the beauty of it upon the earth ; so we need not go up into heaven to see if Christ be there interceding for us ; let us look into our hearts, if they are quickened and inflamed in prayer, and we can cry, *Abba, Father :* By this interceding of the Spirit within us, we may know Christ is interceding above for us.

*Ans. 2.* If we are given to Christ, then he intercedes for us, *John xvii. 9. I pray for them whom thou hast given me :* 'tis one thing for Christ to be given to us, another for us to be given to Christ.

*Qu. How know you that ?*

*Ans.* If thou art a believer, then thou art one given to Christ, and he prays for thee : faith is an act of recumbency, we do rest on Christ, as the stones in the building rest upon the corner-stone. Faith throws itself into Christ's arms ; it faith, Christ is my priest, his blood is my sacrifice, his divine nature is my altar, and here I rest. This faith is seen by the effects of it, a refining work, and a resigning work : it purifies the heart, there is the refining work ; it makes a deed of gift to Christ, it gives up its use, its love to him, *1 Cor. vi. 19. there is the resigning work of faith.* These that believe are given to Christ, and have a part in his prayer, *John xvii. 20. Nor do I pray for these alone, but for all them that shall believe on me.*

*3d Use, of exhortation. Branch 1.* It stirs us up to several duties ; 1. If Christ appears for us in heaven, then we must appear for him upon earth : Christ is not ashamed to carry our names on his breast, and shall we be ashamed of his truth ? Doth he plead our cause, and shall we not stand up in his cause ? What a mighty argument is this to stand up for the honour of Christ in times of apostacy ? Christ is interceding for us : doth he present our names in heaven, and shall not we profess his name on earth ?

*Branch 2.* If Christ lays out all his interest for us at the throne of grace, we must lay out all our interest for him, *Phil. i. 20. That Christ*

*may be magnified.* Trade your talents for Christ's glory : There's no man but hath some talent to trade, one parts, another estate : Oh trade for Christ's glory ! spend and be spent for him : let your head study for Christ, your hands work for Christ, your tongue speak for him ; if Christ be an advocate for us in heaven, we must be factors for him on earth, every one in his sphere must act vigorously for Christ.

*Branch 3.* Believe in this glorious intercession of Christ ! That he now intercedes for us, and that for his sake God will accept us : in the text, *Who maketh intercession for us.* If we believe not, we dishonour Christ's intercession. If a poor sinner may not go to Christ as his high priest, believing in his intercession, then are we Christians in a worse condition under the gospel, than the Jews were under the law : they, when they had sinned, had their high priest to make atonement ; and shall not we have our high priest ? is not Christ our Aaron, who presents his blood and incense before the mercy-seat ? O look up by faith to Christ's intercession ! Christ did not only pray for his disciples and apostles, but for the weakest believer.

*Branch 4. Love your intercessor. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.* Kindness invites love ; had you a friend at court, who, when you were questioned for delinquency or debt, should plead with the judge for you, and bring you off your troubles, would you not love that friend ? So it is here, how oft doth Satan put in his bills against us in the court ? Now Christ is at the judge's hand, he sits at his Father's right hand, ever to plead for us, and to make our peace with God : O how should our hearts be fired with love to Christ ! Love him with a sincere and superlative love, above estate, relations ; *Bern. Plusquam tua, tuos.* And our fire of love should be as the fire on the altar, never to go out, *Lev. vi. 13.*

*4th Use, of comfort to believers.* Christ is at work for you in heaven, he makes intercession for you. Oh ! but I am afraid Christ does not intercede for me.

*Qu. I am a sinner ; who doth Christ intercede for ?*

*Ans. Isa. liii. 12. He made intercession for the transgressors.* Did Christ open his sides for thee, and will he not open his mouth to plead for thee ?

*Qu. But I have offended my high priest, by distrusting*



*distrusting his blood, abusing his love, grieving his spirit; and will he ever pray for me?*

*Ans.* Which of us may not say so? But, Christian, dost thou mourn for unbelief? Be not discouraged, thou may'st have a part in Christ's prayer. *Numb. xvi. The congregation murmured against Aaron; yet, tho' they sinned against their high priest, V. 46. Aaron run in with his censor, and stood between the dead and the living.* If so much bowels in Aaron, who was but a type of Christ, how much more bowels are in Christ, who will pray for them who have sinned against their high priest? Did not he pray for them that crucified him, *Father, forgive them?*

*Qu. But I am unworthy; what am I, that*

*Christ should interceed for me?*

*Ans.* The work of Christ's intercession is a work of free grace; Christ's praying for us, is from his pitying of us; Christ looks not at our worthiness, but our wants.

*Qu. But I am followed with sad temptations?*

*Ans.* But, tho' Satan tempts, Christ prays, and Satan shall be vanquished; tho' thou mayest lose a single battle, yet not the victory: Christ prays that thy faith fail not; therefore, Christian, say, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Christ interceeds, 'tis man that sins, 'tis God that prays: the Greek word for *advocate*, signifies *comforter*. This is a sovereign comfort, *Christ makes intercession.*



## CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

Q. XVI. **H**OW doth Christ execute the office of a King?

*Ans.* In subduing us to himself, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Now of Christ's regal office, *Rev. xix. 16. And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*

Jesus Christ is of mighty renown, he is a king; he hath a kingly title, *High and Mighty, Isa. lvii. 15.* 2. He hath his insignia regalia, his ensigns of royalty, *corona est insigne regiae potestatis*: His crown, *Rev. vi. 2.* His sword, *Psal. xlv. 3. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.* His sceptre, *Heb. i. 8. A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.* 3. His escutcheon, or coat-armour; he gives the lion in his arms, *Rev. v. 5. The lion of the tribe of Judah.* And he is, the text saith, *King of Kings.* He hath a preeminence of all other kings; he is called, *the prince of the kings of the earth, Rev. i. 5.* He must needs be so, for *by him kings reign, Prov. viii. 15.* They hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great King. Christ infinitely outveys all other princes; he hath the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, *Heb. i. 8. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* Christ hath many heirs, but no successors. Well may he be called *King of Kings,*

for he hath an *unlimited power*; other kings their power is limited, but Christ's power is unlimited, *Psal. cxxxv. 6. Whatsoever he pleased, that did he, in heaven and earth, and in the sea.* Christ's power is as large as his will. The angels take the oath of allegiance to him, *Heb. i. 6. Let all the angels of God worship him.*

*Qu. How Christ comes to be King?*

*Ans.* Not by usurpation, but legally: Christ holds his crown by immediate tenure from heaven. God the Father hath decreed him to be king, *Psal. ii. 5, 6. I have set my king upon my holy hill; I will declare the decree.* God hath anointed and sealed him to his regal office. *John vi. 27. Him hath God the Father sealed.* God hath set the crown upon his head.

*Qu. In what sense is Christ king?*

*Ans.* Two ways, 1. In reference to his people. And, 2. In reference to his enemies.

1. In reference to his people: (1.) To govern them. It was prophesied of Christ before he was born, *Matth. ii. 6. And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governour that shall rule my people Israel.* 'Tis a vain thing for a king to have a crown on his head, unless he have a sceptre in his hand to rule.

*Qu. Where doth Christ rule?*

*Ans.* His kingdom is *spiritual*: He rules in the hearts of men. He sets up his throne where  
no

no other king doth, he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience: he subdues mens lusts, *Mic. vii. 19. He will subdue our iniquities.*

*Qu. What doth Christ rule by?*

*Ans.* By law, and by love: 1. He rules by law. It is one of the *jura regalia*, the flowers of the crown to enact laws; Christ as king makes laws, and by his laws he rules: the law of faith, *believe in the Lord Jesus*; the law of sanctity, *1 Pet. i. 15. Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* Many would admit Christ to be their advocate to plead for them, but not their king to rule them.

2. He rules by love: he is a king full of mercy and clemency; as he hath a sceptre in his hand, so an olive branch of peace in his mouth. Though he be the lion of the tribe of Judah for majesty, yet the lamb of God for meekness. His regal rod hath honey at the end of it. He sheds abroad his love into the hearts of his subjects; he rules them with promises as well as precepts. This makes all his subjects become volunteers; they are willing to pay their allegiance to him, *Pf. cx. 3. Thy people shall be a willing people.*

2. Christ is a king to defend his people: as Christ hath a sceptre to rule them, so a shield to defend them, *Pf. iii. 3. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.* When Antiochus did rage furiously against the Jews, he took away the vessels of the Lord's house, set up an idol in the temple; then this great king, called Michael, did stand up for them to defend them, *Dan. xii. 1.* Christ preserves his church as a spark in the ocean, as a flock of sheep among wolves. That the sea should be higher than the earth, and yet not drown it, is a wonder: so, that the wicked should be so much higher than the church in power, and not devour it, is because Christ hath this inscription on his vesture and his thigh, KING OF KINGS: *Pf. cxxiv. 2. If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, they had swallowed us up.* They say, lions are *insomnes*, they have little or no sleep; it is true of the lion of the tribe of Judah, he never slumbers nor sleeps, but watcheth over his Church to defend it: *Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine; I the Lord do keep it lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* If the enemies destroy the church, it must be at a time when it is neither night nor day, for Christ keeps it day and night. Christ is said to carry his church, as the eagle her young Ones upon her wings, *Exod. xix. 4.* The arrow

must first hit the eagle before it can hurt the young ones, and shoot throw her wings: the enemies must first strike through Christ, before they can destroy his Church. Let the wind and storms be up, and the church almost covered with waves, yet Christ is in the ship of the church, and so long there is no danger of shipwreck. Nor will Christ only defend his church, as he is king, but deliver it, *2 Tim. iv. 17. He delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, viz. Nero. 2 Chron. xi. 14. The Lord saved them by a great deliverance.* Sometimes Christ is said to command deliverance, *Pf. xlv. 4.* Sometimes to create deliverance, *Isa. lxxv. 18.* Christ as a king commands deliverance, and, as a God creates it. *And deliverance shall come in his time, Isa. lx. 22. I the Lord will hasten it in his time.*

*Qu. When is the time that this king will deliver his people?*

*Ans.* When the hearts of his people are humblest, when their prayers are ferventest, when their faith is strongest, when their forces are weakest, when their enemies are highest, now is the usual time that Christ puts forth his kingly power in their deliverance, *Isa. xxxiii. 2, 8, 9.*

3. Christ is a king to reward his people, there's nothing lost by serving this king. 1. He rewards his subjects in this life: *1st,* He gives them inward peace and joy; a bunch of grapes by the way; and oftentimes riches and honour. *Godliness hath the promise of this life, 1 Tim. iv. 8.* These are, as it were, the saints veils. But besides, the great reward is to come, *An eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.* Christ makes all his subjects kings, *Rev. ii. 10. I'll give thee a crown of life.* This crown will be full of jewels, and it will never fade, *1 Pet. v. 5.*

2. Christ is a king in reference of his enemies, in subduing and conquering them: he pulls down their pride, befools their policy, restrains their malice. That stone cut out of the mountains without hands, which smote the image, *Dan. ii. 34.* was an emblem, saith Austin, of Christ's monarchical power, conquering and triumphing over his enemies. Christ will make his enemies his footstool, *Pf. cx. 1.* He can destroy them with ease, *2 Chron. xiv. 11. It is nothing for thee, Lord, to help.* He can do it with weak means, without means. He can make the enemies destroy themselves; he sets the Persians against the Grecians: and, *2 Chron. xx. 23.* the children of Ammon helped to destroy one another. Thus Christ is king in vanquishing the enemies of his church.



This is a great ground of comfort to the church of God in the midst of all the combinations of the enemy, *Christ is king*; and he can not only bound the enemies power, but break it. The church hath more with her, than against her, she hath *Emmanuel* on her side, even that great KING to whom all knees must bend.

Christ is called a *man of war*, Exod. xv. 3. he understands all the policy of chivalry; he is described with seven eyes and seven horns, Rev. v. 6. The seven eyes are to discern the conspiracies of his enemies, and the seven horns are to push and vex his enemies.

Christ is described with a crown and a bow, Rev. vi. 2. *He that sat on the white horse had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.* A crown is an ensign of his kingly office, and the bow is to shoot his enemies to death.

Christ is described with a vesture dyed in blood, Rev. xix. 13. He hath a golden sceptre to rule his people, but an iron rod to break his enemies, Rev. xvii. 12, 14. *The ten horns thou sawest are ten kings; these shall make war with the lamb, but the lamb shall overcome them; for he is the king of kings.* The enemies may set up their standard, but Christ will set up his trophies at last, Rev. xiv. 18, 19. *And the angel gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and the wine-press was trodden, and blood came out of the wine-press.* The enemies of Christ shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes to be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by Christ till their blood come out. Christ will at last come off victor, and all his enemies shall be put under his feet; *gaudeo quod Christus Dominus est, aliqui desperassent*, said Miconius in an epistle to Calvin: I am glad Christ reigns, else I should have despaired.

*Use. 1. Branch 1.* See hence, It is no disparagement to serve Christ: he is a king, and it is no dishonour to be employed in a king's service. Some are apt to reproach the saints for their piety; they serve the Lord Christ, he who hath this inscription upon his vesture, *KING of KINGS*. *Theodosius* thought it a greater honour to be a servant of CHRIST, than the head of an empire. *Servire est regnare*--- Christ's servants are called vessels of honour, 2 Tim. ii. 21. and a royal nation, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Serving of Christ ennobles us with dignity: it is a greater honour to serve Christ than to have kings serve us.

*Branch 2.* If Christ be king, it informs us, that all matters of fact must one day be brought before him. Christ hath *Jus vitæ & necis*, the power of life and death in his hand, John v. 22. *The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.* He who once hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench of judicature: kings must come before him to be judged; they who once sat upon the throne, must appear at the bar. God hath committed all judgment to the son, and Christ's is the highest court of judicature: if this king once condemns men, there is no appeal to any other court.

*Branch 3.* See whither we are to go, when we are foiled by corruption; go to Christ, he is king; desire him by his kingly power to subdue thy corruptions, to bind these kings with chains, Ps. cxlix. 3. We are apt to say of our sins, *These sons of Zeruiah will be too strong for us*; we shall never overcome this pride and infidelity: ay, but go to Christ, he is king; though our lusts are too strong for us, yet not for Christ to conquer: he can by his spirit break the power of sin. *Joshua*, when he had conquered five kings, caused his servants to set their feet on the necks of those kings; so Christ can and will set his feet on the necks of our lusts.

*2. Use, of caution:* Is Christ king of kings? Let all great ones take heed how they employ their power against Christ: Christ gives them their power, and if this power shall be made use of for the suppressing of his kingdom, and ordinances, their account will be heavy. God hath laid the key of government upon Christ's shoulders, Isa. ix. 7. and to go to oppose Christ in his kingly office, it is as if the thorns should set themselves in battalia against the fire, or a child fight with an archangel. Christ's sword on his thigh is able to avenge all his quarrels: it is not good to stir a lion; let not man provoke the lion of the tribe of Judah, whose eyes are as a lamp of fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him, Nah. i. 6. *He shall cut off the spirit of princes*, Ps. lxxvi. 12.

*Use. 3.* If Christ be a great king, submit to him. Say not as those Jews, *We have no king but Cesar*, no king but our lusts. This is to choose the *Bramble* to rule over you, and out of the *bramble will come forth a fire*; Judg. 9. Submit to Christ willingly: all the devils in hell submit to Christ; but it is against their will; they are his slaves, not his subjects. Submit cheerfully to Christ's person and his laws. Many would have Christ their *Saviour*, but not their *Prince*; such

as will not have Christ to be their king to rule them, shall never have his blood to save them. Obey all *Christ's princely commands*; if he commands love, humility, good works, be as the needle which points which way soever the loadstone draws.

*Branch 2.* Let such admire God's free grace, who were once under the power and tyranny of satan, and now Christ hath made them, of slaves, to become the subjects of his kingdom. Christ did not need subjects, he hath legions of angels ministering to him; but in his love, he hath honoured you to make you his subjects.

O how long was it ere Christ could prevail with you to come under his banner! how much opposition did he meet with, ere you would wear this prince's colours? But at last omnipotent grace overcame you. When *Peter* was sleeping between two soldiers, an angel came and beat off his chains, *Acts* xii. 17. so, when thou wert sleeping in the devil's arms, that Christ should, by his spirit, smite thy heart, and cause the chains of sin to fall off, and make thee a subject of his kingdom: O admire free grace! Thou who art a subject of Christ, art sure to reign with Christ for ever.

## CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN HIS INCARNATION.

1 TIM. iii. 16. *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh.*

Q. XVII. **W**herein did Christ's humiliation consist?

*Ans.* In his being born, and that in a low condition, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross.

CHRIST'S humiliation consisted in his incarnation, his taking flesh, and being born. It was real flesh Christ took: not the image of a body (as the *Manichees* erroneously held) but a true body; therefore Christ is said to be *made of a woman*, *Gal.* iv. 4. As the bread is made of the wheat, and the wine is made of the grape; so Christ is made of a woman; his body was part of the flesh and substance of the virgin. This is a glorious mystery, *God manifest in the flesh*. In the creation, man was made in God's image; in the incarnation, God was made in man's image.

Q. How came it about that Christ was made flesh?

*Ans.* It was by his father's special designation, *Gal.* iv. 4. *God sent forth his Son made of a woman*. God the father did, in a special manner, appoint Christ to be incarnate; which shews how needful a call is, to any business of weight and importance: to act without a call, is to act without a blessing. Christ himself would not be incarnate, and take upon him the work of a mediator till he had a call. *God sent forth his Son made of a woman*.

Qu. But was there no other way for the re-

storing of fallen man but this, that God should take flesh?

*Ans.* We must not ask a reason of God's will; it is dangerous to pry into God's ark: we are not to dispute but adore. The wise God saw this the best way for our redemption, that Christ should be incarnate; it was not fit for any to satisfy God's justice, but man; none could do it but God; therefore, Christ being both God and man, he is the fittest to undertake this work of redemption.

Qu. Why Christ was born of a woman?

*Ans.* 1. That God might fulfil that promise, *Gen.* iii. 15. *The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head*. 2. Christ was born of a woman that he might roll away that reproach from the woman, which she had contracted by being seduced by the serpent. Christ, in taking his flesh from the woman, hath honoured her sex; that as at the first the woman had made man a sinner, so now, to make him amends, she should bring him a Saviour.

Qu. Why was Christ born of a virgin?

*Ans.* 1. For decency: it became not God to have any mother but a maid, and it became not a maid to have any other son but a God.

2. For necessity. Christ was to be an high priest, most pure and holy. Had he been born after the ordinary course of nature, he had been defiled; (all that spring out of *Adam's* loins have a tincture of sin) but, that *Christ's substance*



might remain pure and immaculate, he was born of a virgin.

3. To answer the type. *Melchisedec* was a type of Christ; he is said to be *without father and without mother*. Christ being born of a virgin, answered the type; he was without father and without mother: without mother as he was God, without father, as he was man.

Q. *How could Christ be made of the flesh and blood of a virgin, yet without sin? The purest virgin that is, her soul is stained with original sin.*

Ans. This knot the scripture unties, *Luke i. 35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. The holy Ghost shall come upon thee,* that is, the Holy Ghost did consecrate and purify that part of the virgin's flesh whereof Christ was made. As the alchymist extracts and draws away the dross from the gold, so the Holy Ghost did refine and clarify that part of the virgin's flesh, separating it from sin. Though the virgin *Mary* herself had sin, yet that part of the flesh, whereof Christ was made, was without sin; otherwise it must have been an impure conception.

Q. *What is meant by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the virgin?*

Ans. *Basil* saith, *It was the Holy Ghost's blessing the flesh of that virgin, whereof Christ was formed.* But there is a further mystery in it; the Holy Ghost having framed Christ in the virgin's womb, did, in a wonderful manner, unite Christ's human nature to his divine, and so of both made one person. This is a mystery, which the angels pry into with adoration.

Q. *When was Christ incarnate?*

Ans. In the fulness of time, *Gal. iv. 4. When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman.* By the fulness of time, we must understand *tempus a patre praeinitium*; so *Ambrose*, *Luther*, *Corn. a Lap.* the determinate time that God had set. More particularly, this fulness of time was when all the prophecies of the coming of the *Messiah* were accomplished; and all legal shadows and figures, whereby he was typified, were abrogated: *in the fulness of time God sent his Son.* And, by the way, observe, this may comfort us, in regard of the church of God; though at present we do not see that peace and purity in the church, as we could desire, yet in the fulness of time, when God's time is come and mercy is ripe, then shall deliverance spring up, and God will come riding upon the

chariots of salvation: *When the fulness of time was come, then God sent forth his Son made of a woman.*

Q. *Why was Jesus Christ made flesh?*

Ans. 1. The *causa prima*, and impulsive cause, was *free grace*; it was *Love in Christ the Father* to send Christ, and *love in Christ* that he came to be incarnate. Love was the intrinsic motive. Christ is God-man, because he is a lover of man. Christ came out of pity and indulgence to us; *non merita nostra, sed miseria nostra*, *Aug.* Not our deserts, but our misery made Christ take flesh. Christ's taking flesh, was a plot of free grace, and a pure design of love. God himself, though Almighty, was overcome with love. Christ incarnate is nothing but love covered with flesh. Christ's assuming our human nature, as it was a master-piece of wisdom, so a monument of free grace.

2. Christ took our flesh upon him, that he might take our sins upon him. He was, saith *Luther*, *maximus peccator*, the greatest sinner, having the weight of the sins of the whole world lying upon him. He took our flesh, that he might take our sins, and so appease God's wrath.

3. Christ took our flesh, that he might make the human nature appear lovely to God, and the divine nature appear lovely to men.

1. *That he might make the human nature lovely to God.* Upon our fall from God, our nature became odious to him; no vermine is so odious to us, as the human nature was to God. When once our virgin nature was become sinful, it was like flesh impoſtumed, or running into sores, lothſom to behold: such was our nature, when corrupt, odious to God, he could not endure to look upon us. Now, Christ taking our flesh, makes this human nature appear lovely to God. As when the sun shines on the glass, it casts a bright lustre; so Christ being clad with our flesh, makes the human nature shine, and appear amiable in God's eyes.

(2.) As Christ being clothed with our flesh, makes the human nature appear lovely to God, so he makes the divine nature appear lovely to man. The pure Godhead is terrible to behold, we could not see it and live: but Christ clothing himself with our flesh, makes the divine nature more amiable and delightful to us. Now we need not be afraid to look upon God, seeing him thro' Christ's human nature. It was a custom of old among the shepherds, they were wont to clothe themselves with sheep-skins, to be more pleasing

sing to the sheep; so Christ clothed himself with our flesh, that the divine nature may be more pleasing to us. The human nature is a glass, through which we may see the love and wisdom, and glory of God clearly represented to us. Through the lantern of Christ's humanity, we may behold the light of the Deity shining. Christ being incarnate, he makes the sight of the Deity not formidable, but delightful to us.

4. Jesus Christ united himself to man, *that man might be drawn nearer to God.* God before was an enemy to us, by reason of sin; but Christ taking our flesh, doth *mediate for us*, and bring us into favour with God. As when a king is angry with a *subject*, the king's son marries the daughter of this subject, and so mediates for this subject, and brings him into favour with the king again: So, when God the Father is angry with us, Christ marries himself to our nature, and now mediates for us with his father, and brings us to be friends again, and now God looks upon us with a favourable aspect. As *Joab* pleaded for *Abalom*, and brought him to king *David*, and *David* kissed him, so doth Jesus Christ ingratiate us into the love and favour of God. Therefore he may well be called a *peace-maker*, having taken our flesh upon him, and so made peace between us and his angry Father.

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See here, as in a glass, the infinite love of God the Father, and when we had lost ourselves by sin, then God in the riches of his grace, did send forth his son made of a woman to redeem us. And behold the infinite love of Christ, that he was willing thus to condescend to take our flesh. Surely the angels would have disdained to have taken our flesh, it would have been a disparagement to them. What king would be willing to wear sackcloth over his cloth of gold? but Christ did not disdain to take our flesh. O the love of Christ! had not Christ been made flesh, we had been made a curse; had not he been incarnate, we had been incarcerated, and had been for ever in prison. Well might an angel be the herald to proclaim this joyful news of Christ's incarnation, *Luke ii. 10. Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.* The love of Christ in being incarnate, will the more appear if we consider;

1. *Whence Christ came.* He came from heaven, and from the richest place in heaven, his Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness.

2. *To whom Christ came.* Was it to his friends? No, he came to sinful man. Man that had defaced his image, abused his love; man who was turned rebel: yet he came to man, resolving to conquer obstinacy with kindness. If he would come to any, why not to the angels that fell? *Heb. ii. 16. He in no wise took upon him the nature of angels.* The angels are of a more noble extract, more intelligible creatures, more able for service; ay, but behold the love of Christ, he came not to the fallen angels, but to mankind. Among the several wonders of the loadstone, this is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but desisting these, it draws the iron to it, one of the most inferior metals: thus Christ leaves the angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl, and he comes to poor sinful man, and draws him into his embraces.

3. *In what manner he came.* He came not in the majesty of a king, attended with his life-guard, but he came poor: not like the heir of heaven, but like one of an inferior descent. The place he was born in was poor: not the royal city *Jerusalem*, but *Bethlehem*, a poor obscure place. He was born in an inn, and a manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains, the beasts his companions; he descended of poor parents. One would have thought, if Christ would have come into the world, he would have made choice of some queen or personage of honour to have descended from; but he comes of mean obscure parents: that they were poor, appears by their offering, *Luke ii. 24. A pair of turtle-doves*, which was the usual offering of the poor, *Lev. xii. 8.* Christ was so poor, that when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it, *Mat. xvii. 27.* He, when he died, made no will. He came into the world poor.

4. *Why he came.* That he might take our flesh, and redeem us; that he might instate us into a kingdom. He was poor, that he might make us rich, *2 Cor. viii. 9.* He was born of a virgin, that we might be born of God. He took our flesh, that he might give us his spirit. He lay in the manger, that we might lie in paradise. He came down from heaven, that he might bring us to heaven. And what was all this but love? If our hearts be not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us: behold love that passeth knowledge! *Eph. iii. 19.*

*Branch 2.* See here the wonderful humility of Christ: *Christ was made flesh. O sancta humilitas, tu filium Dei descendere fecisti in uterum Mariæ Virginis, Aust.* That Christ



should clothe himself with our flesh, a piece of that earth which we tread upon; O infinite humility! Christ's taking our flesh, was one of the lowest steps of his humiliation. Christ did humble himself more in lying in the Virgin's womb, than in hanging upon the cross. It was not so much for man to die, but for God to become man, that was the wonder of humility, *Phil. ii. 7. He was made in the likeness of man.* For Christ to be made flesh, was more humility, than for the angels to be made worms. Christ's flesh is called a vail, *Heb. x. 20. Through the vail, that is, his flesh,* Christ's wearing our flesh, veiled his glory. For him to be made flesh who was equal with God, O humility! *Phil. ii. 6. Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.* He stood upon even ground with God, he was co-essential and co-substantial with his Father, as *Austin* and *Cyril*, and the council of *Nice* express it; yet for all this, he takes flesh. Christ stript himself of the robes of his glory, and covered himself with the rags of our humanity. If *Solomon* did so wonder that God should dwell in the temple, which was enriched and hung with gold, how may we wonder that God should dwell in man's weak and frail nature? Nay, which is yet more humility, Christ not only took our flesh, but took it when it was at the worst, under disgrace; as if a servant should wear a nobleman's livery, when he is impeached of high-treason. Nay, besides, Christ took all the infirmities of our flesh. There are two sorts of infirmities! Such as are sinful without pain, or such as are painful without sin. The first of these infirmities Christ did not take upon him, sinful infirmities, to be covetous or ambitious, Christ never took these upon him: But Christ took upon him painful infirmities; as, 1. Hunger, *Matth. xxi. 28.* He came to the fig-tree, and would have eaten. 2. Weariness; as when he sat on *Jacob's* well to rest him, *John iv. 6.* 3. Sorrow, *Matth. xxvi. 38. My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* It was a sorrow guided with reason, not disturbed with passion. 4. Fear, *Heb. v. 7. He was heard in that he feared.* Nay, yet a further degree of Christ's humility, he not only was made flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. He knew no sin, yet he was made sin, *2 Cor. v. 21.* He was like a sinner; he had all sin laid upon him, but no sin lived in him. *Isa. liii. 12. He was numbred among transgressors.* He who was numbred among

the persons of the Trinity, he is to said to bear the sins of many, *Heb. ix. 28.* Now, this was the lowest degree of Christ's humiliation: For Christ to be reputed as a sinner, never such a pattern of humility. That Christ, who would not endure sin in the angels, should himself endure to have sin imputed to him, it is the most amazing humility that ever was.

From all this learn to be humble. Dost thou see Christ humbling himself, and art thou proud? 'Tis the humble saint that is Christ's picture. Christians, be not proud of your fine feathers: 1. Hast thou an estate? be not proud, the earth thou treadest on is richer than thou: it hath mines of gold and silver in the bowels of it. 2. Hast thou beauty? be not proud: it is but air and dust mingled. 3. Hast thou skill and parts? be humble: *Lucifer* hath more knowledge than thou. 4. Hast thou grace? be humble: thou hast it not of thy own growth, it is borrowed. Were it not folly to be proud of a ring that is lent? *1 Cor. iv. 7.* Thou hast more sin than grace, spots than beauty. O look on Christ, this rare pattern, and be humbled! It is an unseemly sight to see God humbling himself, and man exalting himself; to see an humble Saviour, and a proud sinner. God hates the very resemblance of pride, *Lev. ii. 11.* He would have no honey in the sacrifice. Indeed leaven is sowre; but why no honey? because when honey is mingled with meal or flour, it makes the meal to rise and swell; therefore no honey. God hates the resemblance of the sin of pride; better want parts, comforts of spirit, than humility. *Si Deus superbientibus angelis non pepercit:* If God, saith *Austin*, spared not the angels, when they grew proud, will he spare thee, who are but dust and rottenness?

Branch 3. Behold here a sacred riddle or paradox; *God manifest in the flesh.* The text calls it a mystery. That man should be made in God's image, was a wonder; but that God should be made in man's image, is a greater wonder. That the Ancient of days should be born, that he who thunders in the heaven should cry in the cradle: *Qui tonitruat in cœlis, clamat in cunabulis; qui regit sidera, fugit ubera;* that he who rules the stars, should suck the breast; that a virgin should conceive, that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which-himself made; that the branch should bear the vine; that the mother should be younger than the child she bare, and the child in the womb bigger than the

the mother; that the human nature should not be God, yet one with God: this was not only *mirum* but *miraculum*. Christ taking flesh is a mystery we shall never fully understand till we come to heaven, when our light shall be clear, as well as our love perfect.

*Branch 4.* From hence, *God manifest in the flesh, Christ born of a virgin*, a thing not only strange in nature, but impossible, learn, *That there are no impossibilities with God*: God can bring about things which are not within the sphere of nature to produce; that iron should swim, that the rock should gush out water, that the fire should lick up the water in the trenches, *1 Kings xviii. 38.* 'Tis natural for the water to quench the fire, but for the fire to consume the water, this is impossible in the course of nature: but God can bring about all this, *Jer. xxxii. 37. There is nothing too hard for thee. Zech. viii. 6. If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it be marvellous in my eyes? saith the Lord.* How should God be united to our flesh? it is impossible to us, but not with God; he can do what transcends reason, and exceeds faith. He should not be our God, if he could not do more than we can think, *Eph. iii. 20.* He can reconcile contraries. How apt are we to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities? How do our hearts die within us, when things go cross to our sense and reason? We are apt to say as that prince, *2 Kings vii. 1, 2. If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?* It was a time of famine, and now that a measure of wheat, which was a good part of a bushel, should be sold for a shekle, *viz.* half an ounce of silver, how can this be? So, when things are cross, or strange, God's own people are apt to question, how they should be brought about with success? *Moses*, who was a man of God, and one of the brightest stars that ever shined in the firmament of God's church, yet he was apt to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities, *Numb. xi. 21. And Moses said, the people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat for a whole month: shall the flocks and herds be slain for them to suffice them?* As if he had said in plain English, he did not see how the people of Israel, being so numerous, could be fed for a month, *v. 23. And the Lord said, Is the Lord's hand waxed short?* Surely, that God who brought out Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb, what

cannot he do? O let us rest upon the arm of God's power, and believe in him, in the midst of seeming impossibilities. Remember, *there are no impossibilities with God.* He can subdue a proud heart. He can raise a dying church. Christ born of a virgin, that wonder-working God that wrought this, can bring to pass the greatest seeming impossibilities.

*Use 2. Of exhortation. Branch 1.* Seeing Christ took our flesh, and was born of a virgin, let us labour that he may be spiritually born in our hearts. What will it profit us, that Christ was born into the world, unless he be born in our hearts; that he was united to our nature, unless he be united to our persons? Marvel not that I say unto you, Christ must be born again, *viz.* in our hearts, *Gal. iv. 19. Till Christ be formed in you.* Now then, try if Christ be born in your hearts.

*Qu. How shall we know that?*

*Ans. 1.* There are pangs before the birth; so, before Christ be born in the heart, there are *spiritual pangs*. Some pangs of conscience, *deep convictions*, *Acts ii. 37. They were pricked at their heart.* I grant the new-birth doth *recipere magis & minus*-----all have not the same pangs of sorrow and humiliation, yet all have pangs---If Christ be born in thy heart, thou hast been deeply afflicted for sin. Christ is never born in the heart without pangs-----Many thank God they never had any trouble of spirit, they were always quiet; a sign Christ is not yet formed in them.

*2.* As, when Christ was born into the world, he was made flesh; so if he be born in thy heart, he makes thy heart an heart of flesh, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* Is thy heart incarnate? before it was a rocky heart, and would not yield to God, or take the impressions of the word; *durum est quod non cedit tactui*: now it is fleshly and tender, like melted wax, to take any stamp of the spirit. This is a sign Christ is born in our hearts; when they are hearts of flesh, they melt in tears and in love. What is it the better Christ was made flesh, unless he hath given thee an heart of flesh?

*3.* Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin; so, if he be born in thee, thy heart is a *virgin-heart*, in respect of *sincerity* and *sanctity*. Art thou purified from the love of sin? If Christ be born in thy heart, it is a *sanctum sanctorum*, an holy of holies. If thy heart be polluted with the predominant love of sin, never think Christ is born there; Christ



will never ly any more in a stable. If he be born in thy heart, it is consecrated by the Holy Ghost.

4. If Christ be born in thy heart, then it is with thee as *in a birth*. 1. There is life. Faith is *principium vivens*, it is the vital artery of the soul, *Gal. ii. 20. The life that I live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.* 2. There is appetite, 1 *Pet. ii. 7. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.* The word is like breast-milk, pure, sweet, nourishing; the soul in which Christ is formed, desires this breast-milk. St. Bernard, in one of his soliloquies, comforts himself with this, That sure he had the new-birth in him, because he found in his heart such strong anhelations and thirstings after God. 3. Motion. After Christ is born in the heart, there is a violent motion; there is striving to enter in at the strait gate, and offering violence to the kingdom of heaven, *Matth. xii. 11.* By this we may know Christ is formed in us. This is the only comfort, that as Christ was born into the world, so he is born in our hearts; as he was united to our flesh, so he is united to our person.

Branch 2. As Christ was made in our image, let us labour to be made in his image: Christ being incarnate was made like us, let us labour to be made like him. There are three things in which we should labour to be like Christ. 1. In disposition. He was of a most sweet disposition, *deliciæ humani generis*, Tit. Vespasian. He invites sinners to come to him. He hath bowels to pity us, breast to feed us, wings to cover us. He would not break our heart but with mercy. Was Christ made in our likeness? let us labour to be made in his likeness. Let us be like him in this sweetness of disposition: be not of a morose spirit. It was said of Nabal, 1 *Sam. xxv. 18. He is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.* Some are so barbarous, as if they were akin to the ostrich, they are fired with rage, and breathe forth nothing but revenge; like those two men in the gospel possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, *Matth. viii. 28.* Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies, and conquer them by love. David's kindness melted Saul's heart, 1 *Sam. xxiii. 16.* A frozen heart will be thawed with the fire of love.

2. Be like Christ in grace. He was like us in having our flesh, let us be like him in having his grace. In three graces we should la-

bour to be like Christ: 1. In humility, *Phil. ii. 8. He humbled himself*; he left the bright robes of his glory, to be clothed with the rags of our humility: a wonder of humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace. Humility, saith St. Bernard, is *contemptus propriæ excellentiæ*, a contempt of self-excellency, a kind of self-annihilation. This is the glory of a Christian. We are never so comely in God's eyes, as when we are black in our own. In this let us be like Christ. True religion is to imitate Christ. And indeed, what cause have we to be humble, if we look within us, about us, below us, above us?

(1.) If we look *intra nos, within us*, here we see our sins represented to us in the glass of conscience; lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermine crawling in our souls, *Job xlii. 23. How many are my iniquities?* Our sins are as the sand of the sea for number, as the rocks of the sea for weight. *Auspin* cries out, *Væ mihi, facibus peccatorum poluitur templum Domini*, ---- My heart, which is God's temple, is polluted with sin.

(2.) If we look *juxta nos, about us*; here's that may humble us. We may see others Christians out-shining us in gifts and graces, as the sun out-shines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit, perhaps we have but here and there an olive-berry growing, to shew that we are of the right kind, *Isa. xvii. 6.*

(3.) If we look *infra nos, below us*; here is that may humble us. We may see the mother earth, out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element, *Job xxx. 8. Thou art viler than the earth* Thou that dost set up thy scutcheon, and blaze thy coat of arms, behold thy pedigree; thou art but *pulvis animatus*, walking ashes: and wilt thou be proud? What is Adam? He is the son of dust; and what is dust? the son of nothing.

(4.) If we look *supra nos, above us*; here is that may humble us. If we look up to heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud. *Superbos sequitur ultor a tergo Deus*----The proud man is the mark which God shoots at, and he never misses the mark. He threw proud Lucifer out of heaven; he thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of his throne, and turned him to eat grass. *Dan. iv. 29.* O then be like Christ in humility.

2. Did Christ take our flesh? was he made like to us? let us be made like to him in zeal, *John ii. 17. The zeal of thy house hath eaten me*

me up. He was zealous when his Father was dishonoured. In this let us be like Christ, zealous for God's *truth and glory*, which are the two orient pearls of the crown of heaven. Zeal is as needful for a Christian, as salt for the sacrifice, or fire on the altar. Zeal without prudence, is *rashness*; prudence without zeal, is *cowardliness*. Without zeal, our duties are not acceptable to God. Zeal is like rosin to the bow-strings, without which the lute makes no music.

3. Be like Christ in the contempt of the world. When Christ took our flesh, he came not in the *pride of flesh*, he did not descend immediately from kings and nobles, but was of mean parentage. Christ was not ambitious of *titles of honour*. Christ did as much decline the worldly dignity and greatness, as others seek it. When they would have made him a king, he refused it; he chose rather to ride upon the sole of an ass, than to be drawn in a chariot; and to hang upon a wooden cross, than to wear a golden crown. Christ scorned the pomp and glory of the world: he waved secular affairs, *Luke xii. 13. Who made me a judge?* His work was not to arbitrate matters of law; he came not into the world to be a *magistrate*, but a *redeemer*. Christ was like a star in an higher orb, he minded nothing but heaven. Was Christ made like us? let us be made like him, in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let not us be ambitious of the honours and preferments of the world; let us not purchase the world with the loss of a good conscience. What wise man would damn himself, to grow rich? or pull down his soul, to build up an estate? Be like Christ in an holy contempt of the world.

4. Be like Christ in conversation. Was Christ incarnate? was he made like us? let us be made like him in holiness of life. No temptation could fasten upon Christ, *John xiv. 30. The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.* Temptation to Christ was like a spark of fire upon a marble pillar, which glides off. Christ's life, saith *Chrysostom*, was brighter than the sun-beams. Let us be like him in this, *2 Pet. i. 15. Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* We are not, saith *Austin*,

to be like Christ in working miracles, but in a holy life. A Christian should be both a loadstone and a diamond: a loadstone, in drawing others to Christ; a diamond, casting a sparkling lustre of holiness in his life. O let us be so just in our dealings, so true in our promises, so devout in our worship, so unblameable in our lives, that we may be the walking pictures of Christ. Thus as Christ was made in our likeness, let us labour to be made in his likeness.

*Branch 3.* If Jesus Christ was so abased for us; he took our flesh, which was a disparagement to him; 'twas mingling dust with gold: if he, I say, abased himself so for us, let us be willing to be abased for him. If the world reproach us for Christ's sake, and cast dust on our name, let us bear it with patience. The Apostles, *Acts v. 41.* departed from the council, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name*: that they were graced to be disgraced for Christ. That is a good saying of St. *Austin*, *Quid suis detrahit famæ meæ, addet mercedi meæ*; they who take away from a Saint's name, shall add to his reward; and while they make his credit weigh lighter, they make his crown weigh heavier. O was Christ content to be humbled and abased for us, to take our flesh, and to take it when it was in disgrace! Let us not think much to be abased for Christ. Say as *David*, *2 Sam. vi. 22. If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.* If to serve my Lord Christ, if to keep my conscience pure, if this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.

*Use 3d of comfort.* Jesus Christ having taken our flesh, hath ennobled our nature, *naturam nostram nobilitavit*. Our nature is now invested with greater royalties and privileges than in time of innocency. Before, in innocency, we were made in the image of God; but now, Christ having assumed our nature, we are made one with God; our nature is ennobled above the angelical nature. Christ taking our flesh, hath made us nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are his friends, believers are flesh of his flesh, his members, *Eph. v. 30.* and *chap. i. 23.* And the same glory which is put upon Christ's human nature, shall be put upon believers.



## CHRIST'S EXALTATION.

PHIL. ii. 9. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c.*

**B**EFORE, we have spoken of Christ's *humiliation*, now of his *exaltation*: before you saw the sun of righteousness in the eclipse; now you shall see it coming out of the eclipse, and shining in its full splendour and glory: *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him; super exaltavit, Ambr. Above all exaltation.*

Quest. XVIII. *Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?*

*Ans.* In his rising from the dead, his ascending into heaven, and sitting at the right-hand of God the father, &c.

Qu. *In what sense God hath exalted Christ?*

*Ans.* Not in respect of Christ's Godhead, for that cannot be exalted higher than it is: as in Christ's humiliation the Godhead was not lower; so in his exaltation, the Godhead is not higher: but Christ is exalted as a *Mediator*, his human nature is exalted.

Qu. *How many ways is Christ exalted?*

*Ans.* Five ways: God hath exalted Christ, 1. In his titles. 2. In his office. 3. In his ascension. 4. In his session at God's right-hand. 5. In constituting him judge of the world.

*First title.* 1. God hath exalted Christ in his titles, 1. He is exalted to be a Lord, *Acts ix. 17. The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.* He is a Lord in respect of his sovereignty; he is Lord over angels and men. *Mat. xxviii. 18. All power is given to him.* Christ hath three keys in his hand, the key of the grave, to open the graves of men at the resurrection; the key of heaven, to open the kingdom of heaven to whom he will; the key of hell; *Rev. i. 18. to lock up the damned in that fiery prison.*

To this Lord all knees must bow, *Phil. ii. 10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow: Name*, is put here for *person*; so that holy thing Jesus, to the sceptre of that divine person every knee shall bow. *Bowing* is put for *subjection*; all must be subdued to him as sons or captives, submit to him as to the Lord or judge; *Kiss the Son*, *Pf. ii. 12. with a kiss of love and loyalty.* We must not only cast ourselves into Christ's

arms to be saved by him, but we must cast ourselves at his feet, to serve him.

*Second title*, Christ is exalted to be a prince, *Dan. xii. 1. There shall stand up Michael the great prince*: Some think it was a created angel, but it was *Angelus Foederis*, Christ the angel of the covenant. He is a great prince, *Rev. i. 5. The prince of the kings of the earth*: they hold their crowns by immediate tenure from him; his throne is above the stars, he hath angels and archangels for his attendants. Thus he is exalted in his titles of honour.

*2dly*, God hath exalted Christ in his office; he hath honoured him to be *salvator mundi*, the saviour of the world, *Acts v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right-hand to be a prince, and a Saviour.* It was a great honour to *Moses* to be a temporal Saviour; but what is it to be the Saviour of souls? Christ is called the horn of salvation, *Luke i. 69. He saves from sin, Mat. i. 21. From wrath, 1 Thes. i. 10. To save, is a flower belongs only to his crown, Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other.* What an honour is this to Christ? how doth this make heaven ring of the saints praises? they sing hallelujahs to Christ their saviour, *Rev. v. 9. They sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*

*3dly*, God hath exalted Christ in his ascension: if he be ascended, then he is exalted, *Austin* saith, *Some were of opinion that Christ's body ascended into the orb and circle of the sun*: so the *Hermians*. But the scripture is plain, he ascended into heaven, *Luke xxv. 51. and Eph. v. 10. Far above all heavens*; therefore above the firmament. He is ascended into the highest part of the empyrean heaven, which *Paul* calls the third heaven. Concerning Christ's ascension, two things,

1. The manner of Christ's ascension. *1st*, Christ being to ascend, blessed his disciples, *Luke xxiv. 50. He lift up his hands, and blessed them, and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.* Christ did

not leave his disciples houses and lands, but he left them his blessing.

2dly, Christ ascended as a conqueror, in a way of triumph, *Pf. lxxviii. 18. Thou hast led captivity captive, &c.* He triumphed over sin, hell, and death; and Christ's triumph is a believer's triumph: Christ hath conquered sin and hell for every believer.

3dly, The fruit of Christ's ascension: Christ's ascension to heaven causeth the descension of the holy spirit into our hearts, *Eph. iv. 8. When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men.* Christ having ascended up in the clouds, as his triumphant chariot, gives the gift of his spirit to us: as a king at his coronation bestows gifts liberally to his favourites.

4thly, God hath exalted Christ in his session at God's right-hand, *Mark xvi. 19. After the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat upon the right-hand of God.* *Eph. i. 20. He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand, far above all principality, and power, and every name that is named.*

Qu. What is meant by Christ's sitting at God's right-hand?

Ans. To speak properly, God hath no right-hand or left; for being a spirit, he is void of all bodily parts: but it is a borrowed speech, a metaphor taken from the manner of kings, who were wont to advance their favourites next to their own persons, and set them at their right-hand: *Solomon* caused a seat to be set for the queen his mother, and placed her at his right-hand, *2 Kings ii. 19.* So for Christ to sit at the right-hand of God, is to be in the next place to God the father in dignity and honour. The human nature of Christ, being personally united to the divine, is now set down in a royal throne in heaven, and adored even of angels.

By virtue of the personal union of Christ's human nature with the divine, there is a communication of all that glory from the Deity of Christ as his human nature is capable of. Not that the manhood of Christ is advanced to an equality with the Godhead, but the divine nature being joined with the human, the human nature is wonderfully glorified, though not deified. Christ as mediator is filled with all majesty and honour, beyond the comprehension of the highest order of angels: Christ in his humiliation descended so low, that it was not fit to go lower; and in his exaltation he ascended so high, that it is not possible to go higher. In his

resurrection he was exalted above the grave, in his ascension he was exalted above the aery and starry heaven; in his sitting at God's right-hand, he is exalted above the highest heavens far, *Eph. iv. 10. Far above all heavens.*

5thly, God hath exalted Christ in constituting him judge of the whole world, *John v. 22. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.* At that day of judgment shall Christ be exalted supereminently, *He shall come in the glory of his Father,* *Mark viii. 38.* He shall wear the same embroidered robes of majesty, as the father; and he shall come with all his holy angels, *Mat. xxv. 31.* He who was led to the bar with a band of soldiers, shall be attended to the bench with a guard of angels: Christ shall judge his judges, he shall judge *Pilate* that condemned him: kings must leave their throne, and come to his bar. And this is the highest court of judicature, from whence is no appeal.

1st Use, Of information. Branch 1. See Christ's different state on earth, and now in heaven: O how is the scene altered! when he was on earth, he lay in the manger, now he sits in the throne; then he was hated and scorned of men, now he is adored of angels; then his name was reproached, now God hath given him a name above every name, *Phil. ii. 9.* Then he came in the form of a servant, and, as a servant, stood with his bason and towel, and washed his disciples feet, *John xiii. 4, 5.* now he is clad in his prince's robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns before him; on earth he was a man of sorrow, now he is anointed with the oil of gladness; on earth was his crucifixion, now his coronation; then his father frowned upon him in desertion, now he hath set him at his right-hand; before he seemed to have no form or beauty in him, *Isa. liii. 2.* now he is the brightness of his Father's glory, *Heb. i. 3.* O what a change is here! *him hath God highly exalted.*

Branch 2. Was Christ first humble, and then exalted? hence learn, the way to true honour is humility, *Luke xiv. 11. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* The world looks upon humility as that which will make one contemptible, but it is the ready way to honour: the way to rise is to fall, the way to ascend is to descend. Humility exalts us in the esteem of men, and it exalts us to an higher throne in heaven, *Mat. xviii. 4. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, viz.* He shall have a greater degree of glory in it.

Q

Branch 3.



*Branch 3.* Christ first suffered, and then was exalted: see hence, that sufferings must go before glory. Many desire to be glorified with Christ, but they are not content to suffer for Christ, *2 Tim. ii. 12. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.* The wicked first reign, and then suffer; the godly first suffer, and then reign: there is no way to *Constantinople*, but through the *Straits*; no way to heaven, but through sufferings; no way to the crown but by the way of the cross. *Jerusalem* above is a pleasant city, streets of gold, gates of pearl: but we must travel through a dirty road to this city, through many reproaches and sufferings, *Acts xiv. 22.* We must enter into glory as Christ did; first he suffered shame and death, and now is exalted to sit at God's right-hand.

*2d Use, of comfort. Branch 1.* Christ, being so highly exalted, hath enobled our nature; he hath crowned it with glory, and lifted it above angels and archangels: though Christ, as he was man, was made a little lower than the angels, *Heb. ii. 9.* yet as the human nature is united to the divine, and is at God's right-hand, so the human nature is above the angels. And if God hath so dignified our human nature, what a shame is it that we should debase it? God hath exalted the human nature above the angels, and the drunkard abaseth the human nature below the beasts.

*Branch 2.* Christ being exalted at God's right-hand, the key of government is laid upon his shoulders; he governs all the affairs of the world for his own glory. Do you think when Christ is so highly advanced, and hath all power in heaven and earth in his hand, he will not take care of his elect, and turn the most astonishing providence to the good of his Church? In a clock, the wheels move cross one to another, but all makes the clock strike; so Christ being at his Father's right hand, he will make the most cross providence tend to the salvation of his church.

*Branch 3.* Christ being at God's right-hand, we may be assured he hath now finished the work of man's redemption, *Heb. x. 12. This man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right-hand of God.* If Christ had not fully expiated, and satisfied God's law, he had not sat down at God's right-hand, but had still lain in the grave: but now he is exalted to glory: this is an evident token he hath done and suffered all that was required of him for the working out our redemption.

*Branch 4.* Though Jesus Christ is so highly

exalted in glory, yet he is not forgetful of us on earth. Some, when they are raised to places of honour forget their friends; when the chief butler was restored to his place at court, then he forgot poor *Joseph* in prison: But it is not so with Christ; though he be exalted to such glory in heaven, yet he is not unmindful of his saints on earth. Our high priest hath all the names and wants of his people written upon his breast-plate; art thou tempted? Though Christ be in glory, he knows how to pity and succour thee, *Heb. iv. 15. We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.* Dost thou mourn for sin? Christ, though in a glorified state, he hears thy sighs, bottles thy tears.

*Branch 5.* Christ being exalted at God's right-hand, this is for the comfort of believers, that they shall one day be exalted to that place of glory where he is: *Christ's exaltation is our exaltation.* Christ hath prayed for this, *John xvii. 24. Father, I will, that all those whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am.* And he is said to go before to prepare a place for believers, *John xiv. 2.* Christ is called the *head*, the church is called his *body*, *Eph. i. 23.* The head being exalted to honour, the *body mystical* shall be exalted too; as sure as Christ is exalted far above all heavens, so sure will he instate believers in all that glory which his human nature is adorned with, *John xvii. 22.* As here he puts his grace upon the saints, so shortly he will put his glory upon them. This is comfort to the poorest Christian: perhaps thou hast scarce an house to put thy head in, yet thou mayest look up to heaven and say, there is my house, there is my country; and I have already taken possession of heaven in my head Christ; he sits there, and it will not be long before I shall sit there with him; he is upon the throne of glory, and I have his word for it, I shall sit upon the throne with him, *Rev. iii. 21.*

*3d Use, of exhortation:* hath God highly exalted Christ? Let us labour to exalt him. Let us exalt, 1. His person. 2. His truths.

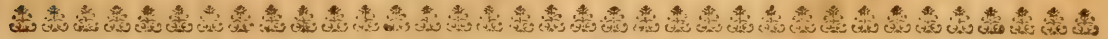
1. Let us exalt Christ in our hearts; believe, O adore and love him. We cannot lift Christ up higher in heaven, but we may in our hearts. 2. Let us exalt him in our lips; let us praise him. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, our tongues must be the organs in these temples: by praising and commending Christ, we exalt him in the esteem of others. 3. Let us exalt him in our lives, by living holy lives:

*vera religio haec, sine macula vivere lactant.* It is not all the doxologies and prayers of the world do so exalt Christ, as an holy life: this makes Christ renowned, and lifts him up indeed, when his followers walk worthy of Christ.

2. Let us exalt Christ's truths. *Bucholcerus*, in his chronology, reports of the nobles of *Polonia*, that ever when the gospel is read, they lay their hands upon their swords, by that intimating they are ready to maintain the gospel with the hazard of their lives. Let us exalt

Christ's truths; maintain the truths of Christ against error; maintain the doctrine of free-grace against merit; the Deity of Christ against *Socinianism*.

Truth is the most orient pearl of Christ's crown; contend for the truth, as one would for a sum of money that it should not be wrested out of his hand: this Christ takes to be an exalting of him, when we exalt his truths, herein his glory is so much concerned.



## CHRIST THE REDEEMER.

**Q. XIX.** **H**OW doth the spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

*Ans.* The spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

HERE are in this answer two things. 1. Something implied, *viz.* that Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption, in these words, *The redemption purchased by Christ.*

2. Something expressed, *viz.* that the spirit applies to us this redemption purchased, by working faith in us, &c.

(1.) The thing here implied, that Jesus Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption. The doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ is a glorious doctrine; it is the marrow and quintessence of the gospel: in this all a Christian's comfort lies. Great was the work of *creation*, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other shedding of blood, *Luke i. 51.* The creation was but the work of God's fingers, *1st. viii.* 3. Redemption the work of his arm, *Heb. ix. 12.* *Having obtained eternal redemption for us.* Christ's purchasing redemption for us, implies that our sins did mortgage and sell us; had there not been some kind of mortgaging, there had been no need of redemption: *redimere, q. rursus emere*, Hierom. Now Christ, when we were thus mortgaged and sold by sin, did purchase our redemption: Christ had the best right to redeem us, for he is our kinsman, one that is near in blood: in the old law the nearest kinsman was to redeem his brothers land, *Ruth iv.*

4. Thus Christ being near a-kin to us, *Flesh of our flesh*, is the fittest to redeem us.

*Qu.* How doth Christ redeem us?

*Ans.* By his own precious blood, *Eph. i. 7.* *In whom we have redemption through his blood.* Among the *Romans*, he was said to redeem another, that laid down a price equivalent for the ransom of the prisoner. In this sense Christ is a redeemer, he hath paid a price. Never such a price paid to ransom prisoners, *1 Cor. vi. 20.* *Ye are pretio empti, bought with a price;* and this price was his own blood. So in the text, *by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,* this blood being the blood of that person who was God as well as man, is a price sufficient for the ransom of millions.

*Qu.* From what doth Christ redeem us?

*Ans.* From sin. To be redeemed from *Turkish* slavery is a great mercy, but it is infinitely more to be redeemed from sin. There is nothing can hurt the soul but sin: It is not affliction hurts it, it often makes it better, as the furnace makes gold the purer; but it is sin that doth damnify. Now Christ redeems us from sin, *Heb. ix. 26.* *Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

*Qu.* But how are we redeemed from sin? Do we not see corruption stirring in the unregenerate? Much pride and unmortified passion?

*Ans.* We must distinguish of redemption: redemption is either *inchoata*, or *plena*; *i. e.* a redemption but begun, and perfect; sin cannot stand with a perfect redemption; but here it is begun; sin may stand with an imperfect redemption. There may be some darkness in the air



at the sun's first rising, but not when the sun is at the full meridian: while our redemption is but begun, there may be sin; but not when it is perfect in glory.

*Qu. But in what sense hath Christ redeemed justified persons from sin?*

*Ans.* 1. *Areatu*, from the guilt of sin, though not the stain. *Guilt is the binding a person over to punishment.* Now Christ hath redeemed a justified person from the guilt of sin; he hath discharged his debts. Christ saith to God's justice, as *Paul to Philemon*, *If he hath wronged thee any thing, or owes thee ought, put that on my account*, v. 18.

2. A justified person is redeemed *a dominio*, from the power and regency of sin, though not the presence. Sin may *furere*, but not *regnare*; it may rage in a child of God, but not reign; lust did rage in *David*, fear in *Peter*, but it did not reign; they recovered themselves by repentance, *Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you.* Sin lives in a child of God, but is deposed from the throne; it lives not as a king, but a captive.

3. A believer is redeemed *a maledictione*, from the curse due to sin, *Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* Christ said to his Father, as *Rebecca to Jacob*, *upon me, upon me be the curse; let the blessing be upon them, but upon me be the curse.* And now, there is no condemnation to believers, *Rom. viii. 1.* An unbeliever hath a double condemnation; one from the law which he hath transgressed, and the other from the gospel, which he hath despised. But Christ hath redeemed a believer from this malediction, he hath set him out of the power of hell and damnation.

*Qu. To what hath Christ redeemed us?*

*Ans.* He hath redeemed us to a glorious inheritance, *1 Pet. i. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*

1. *To an inheritance.* Christ hath not only redeemed us out of prison, but he hath redeemed us to a state of happiness, to an inheritance; heaven is not a lease which soon expires, but an inheritance; and a glorious inheritance, *Col. i. 12.* An inheritance in light. *Lumen aëquat colores*; light adorns and gilds the world: what were the world without light but a prison? The heavenly inheritance is irradiated with light: Christ, as a continual sun, enlightens it with his beams, *Rev. xxi. 23.*

2. *To an inheritance incorruptible:* It doth not moulder away, or suffer dissolution. Earthly comforts are shadowed out by the tabernacle, which was transient; but heaven is set out by the temple which was fixed and permanent, built with stone overlaid with gold. This is the glory of the celestial inheritance; it is incorruptible. Eternity is written upon the frontispiece of it.

3. *Undefiled.* The Greek word for undefiled, alludes to a precious stone called *Amiantus*, which cannot be blemished: such a place is heaven, undefiled, nothing can stain it; there's no sin there to eclipse its purity. For the holiness and undefiledness of it, it is compared to pure gold, and to the sapphire and emerald, *Rev. xxi. The Sapphire hath a virtue* (saith *Pliny*) *to preserve chasteness; the Emerald to expel poison.* These are the lively emblems of heaven, to shew the sanctity of it; no fever of lust; no venom of malice; there are none but pure virgin spirits inhabit it.

4. *It fadeth not away.* The Greek word is the name of a flower which keeps a long time fresh and green, as *Clem. Alexandrinus* writes. Such is the heavenly inheritance, it doth not lose its orient colour, but keeps its freshness and greeness to eternity; the beauty of it fadeth not away. *To this glorious inheritance hath Christ redeemed the saints:* an inheritance which cannot be fully described or set forth by all the lights of heaven, though every star were a sun. And that which is the diamond in the ring, the glory of this inheritance, is, the eternal sight and fruition of the blessed God; the sight of God will be a most alluring, heart-ravishing object: the kings' presence makes the court, *John iii. 2. We shall see him as he is.* It is comfortable to see God shewing himself through the lattice of an ordinance, to see him in the word and sacrament: the martyrs thought it comfortable to see him in prison: O then, what will it be to see him in glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun! and not only see him, but enjoy him for ever; *Praemium quod fide non attingitur*, Aug. Faith itself is not able fully to comprehend this reward. And all this blessedness hath Christ purchased through the redemption of his blood.

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See into what a wretched, deplorable condition we had brought ourselves: into slavery; slavery, so that we needed Christ to purchase our redemption: *nihil durius servitute*, Cicero. *Slavery is the worst condition*; such as are now prisoners in *Algiers* think it so.

But

But by sin we are in a worse slavery, slaves to Satan a merciless tyrant, who sports in the damnation of souls. In this condition we were when Christ came to redeem us.

*Branch 2.* See in this, as in a transparent glass, the love of Christ to the elect; he came to redeem them: that he died intentionally for. Were it not great love for a king's son to pay a great sum of money to redeem a captive? But that he should be content to be a prisoner in his stead, and die for his ransom; this were matter of wonder. Jesus Christ hath done all this, he hath written his love in characters of blood:-----It had been much for Christ to speak a good word to his Father for us, but he knew that was not enough to redeem us: tho' a word speaking made a world, yet it would not redeem a sinner, *Heb. ix. 22. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.*

*2d Use. Of Trial.* If Christ came to purchase our redemption, then let us try whether we are the persons whom Christ hath redeemed from the guilt and curse due to sin. This is a needful trial; for, let me tell you, there is but a certain number whom Christ hath redeemed. O say sinners, Christ is a redeemer, and we shall be saved by him! Beloved, Christ came not to redeem all; then we overthrow the decrees of God. Redemption is not as large as creation. I grant there is a sufficiency of merit in Christ's blood to save all; but there's difference between sufficiency and efficiency. Christ's blood is a sufficient price for all, but it is effectual only to them that believe. A plaister may have a sovereign virtue in it to heal any wound, but it doth not heal unless applied to the wound. And if it be so, that all have not the benefit of Christ's redemption, only some; then it is a necessary question to ask our souls, *Whether we are in the number of them that are redeemed by Christ, or no?*

*Qu. How shall we know that?*

*Ans.* Such as are redeemed, are reconciled to God; the enmity is taken away: their judgments approve, their wills incline *ad bonum*, *Col. i. 21.* Are they redeemed that are unreconciled to God? who hate God and his people, (as the vine and laurel have an antipathy) who do all they can to disparage holiness? Are these redeemed who are unreconciled? Christ hath purchased a reprieve for these: but a sinner may have a reprieve, and yet go to hell, *John v. 6.*

2. Such as are redeemed by Christ, are re-

deemed from the world, *Gal. i. 5. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver (or redeem) us from this present evil world.* Such as are redeemed by Christ, are risen with Christ, *Col. iii. 1.* As the birds, tho' they light upon the ground to pick up a little seed, yet immediately they take their wings and fly up to the heaven again: so the redeemed of the Lord, tho' they use the world, and take the lawful comforts of it, yet their hearts are presently off these things, and they ascend to heaven; live here, and trade above. Such as Christ hath died for, are *dead to the world*; to the honours, profits, and preferments of it. What shall we think of them who say, they are redeemed of the Lord, yet are lovers of the world? Like the Tribes who desired to have their portion on this side *Canaan*: *Phil. iii. 19. Who mind earthly things.* They pull down their souls to build up an estate. They are not redeemed by Christ, who are not redeemed from the world.

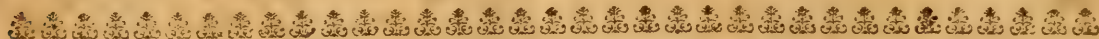
*3d Use. Of Comfort,* to such as are redeemed: you are happy, the lot of free grace is fallen upon you; you who were once in the Devil's prison, you have broke this prison: you that were once bound in the chains of sin, God hath begun to beat off your chains, and hath freed you from the power of sin, and curse due to it. What a comfort is this? And is there any consolation in Christ? it is thine; is there any sweet fruit growing upon the promise? thou mayst gather it: are there any glorious privileges in the gospel? they are thy jointure, justification, adoption, coronation: is there any glory in heaven? thou shalt shortly drink of that river of pleasure: hast thou any temporal comforts? these are but a pledge and earnest of more: thy meal in the barrel is but a bait by the way, and an earnest of that angels' food which God hath prepared for thee. How mayst thou be comforted in all worldly afflictions, tho' the fig-tree flourish not? Nay, in case of death, death hath lost its sting; *Mors obit morte Christi.* Death shall carry thee to thy redeemer: fear not dying, not happy but by dying.

*Use ult. Of Exhortation.* Long for the time when you shall have a full and perfect redemption in heaven, an eternal jubilee; when you shall be freed not only from the power but from the presence of sin. Here a believer is a prisoner that hath broken prison, but walks with a fetter on his leg: when the banner of glory



glory shall be displayed over you, you shall be as the angels of God, you shall never have a sinful thought more; when no pain or grief, no aching head or unbelieving heart. You shall see Christ's face, and ly for ever in his arms: you shall be as *Joseph*, Gen. xlii. 14. They brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto *Pharaoh*. Long for that

time, when you shall put off your prison-garments, and change your raiment, and put on the embroidered garment of glory. O long! yet be content to wait for this full and glorious redemption, when you shall be more happy than you can desire, when you shall have that *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into man's heart to conceive.*



## O F F A I T H.

GAL. ii. 20. *The Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of G O D.*

**T**HE Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us.

CHRIST is the glory, and faith in Christ the comfort of the gospel.

Qu. *What are the kinds of faith?*

Ans. Fourfold: 1. An historical or dogmatical faith, which is the believing the truths revealed in the word, because of divine authority.

2. There is a temporary faith, which lasteth but for a time, and vanisheth, *Matth. xiii. 21. Yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for a while.* A temporary faith is like *Jonah's* gourd, which came up in a night, and withered, *chap. iv. 10.*

3. A miraculous faith, which was granted to the apostles, to work miracles for the confirmation of the gospel: This *Judas* had; he cast out devils, yet was cast out to the Devil.

4. A true justifying faith, which is called *A faith of the operation of God*, Col. ii. 12. and is a jewel hung only upon the elect.

Qu. *What is justifying faith?*

Ans. I shall show, (1.) *What it is not.* It is not a bare acknowledgment that Christ is a Saviour; indeed there must be an acknowledgment, but that is not sufficient to justify. The Devils acknowledged Christ's Godhead, *Matth. viii. 29. Jesus the Son of God.* There may be an assent to divine truth, yet no work of grace on the heart: many assent in their judgments, that *sin is an evil thing*, but they go on in sin, their corruptions are stronger than their convictions; and that Christ is excellent: they cheapen the pearl, but do not buy.

(2.) *What justifying faith is?* I answer, true justifying faith consists in three things.

1. *Self-renunciation*: faith is a going out of one's self; a man is taken off from his own bottom, he sees he hath no righteousness of his own to save him, *Phil. iii. 9. Not having my own righteousness.* Self-righteousness is a broken reed, the soul dares not lean on. Repentance and faith are both *humbling graces*; by repentance a man abhors himself; by faith he goes out of himself. It is with a sinner in the first act of believing, as with *Israel* in their wilderness-march; behind they saw *Pharaoh* and his chariots pursuing them, before them the *Red-sea* ready to devour them: so the soul behind sees God's justice pursuing him for sin, before hell ready to devour him; and, in this forlorn condition, he *sees nothing in himself* to help him, but he must perish unless he can find help in another.

2. *Recumbency*: the soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; *faith rests on Christ's person.* Faith believes the promise; but that which Faith rests upon in the promise, is the person of Christ: therefore the spouse is said to *lean upon her beloved*, Cant. viii. 5. And faith is described to be a *believing on the name of the son of God*, John iii. 23. viz. on his person. The promise is but the cabinet, Christ is the jewel in it which faith embraceth; the promise is but the dish, Christ is the food in it which faith feeds on. And as faith rests on *Christ's person*, so on his person under this notion, *as he was crucified.* Faith glories in the *cross of Christ*, Gal. vi. 14. To consider Christ as he is crowned with all manner of excellencies, doth rather stir

stir up admiration and wonder; but Christ looked upon as bleeding and dying, is the proper object of our faith; therefore it is called *faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25.

3. *Appropriation*, or the applying Christ to ourselves: a medicine, tho' it be never so sovereign, yet if it be not applied to the wound, will do no good, tho' the plaster be made of Christ's own blood, yet it will not heal, unless it be applied by faith; the blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. This *applying* of Christ is called a *receiving* of him, John i. 12. The hand receiving of gold, enricheth; so the hand of faith receiving Christ's golden merits with salvation, enricheth us.

Qu. *How is faith wrought?*

Ans. By the *blessed Spirit*; it is called the *spirit of grace*, Zech. xii. 10. because it is the spring and efficient of all grace. Faith is the *chief work* which the spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world God did but speak a word, but in working faith he puts forth his arm. Luke i. 51. the Spirit's working faith is called, *The exceeding greatness of God's power*. What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave, when such a *tomb-stone* lay upon him, *the sins of all the world*! yet he was raised up by the Spirit: the same power the Spirit of God puts forth in working faith, the Spirit irradiates the mind, subdues the will: the will naturally is like a garrison, which holds out against God; the Spirit with a sweet violence conquers, or rather changeth the will, making the sinner willing to have Christ upon any terms, to be ruled by him as well as saved by him.

Qu. *Wherein lies the preciousness of faith?*

Ans. As faith is the *chief gospel-grace*, the head of the graces; as gold among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Clem. Alexandrinus calls the other graces the daughters of faith. Indeed in heaven Love will be the chief grace; but while we are here militant, love must give place to faith: love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth, 1 John v. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*.

2. As faith hath influence upon all the graces, and sets them a-work, not a grace stirs till faith set it a work. As the clothier sets the poor a work, he sets their wheel a going: faith sets hope a-work. The heir must believe his

title to an estate in reversion, before he can hope for it; faith believes its title to glory, and then hope waits for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. *Faith which worketh by love*; believing the mercy and merit of Christ causeth a flame of love to ascend. Faith sets patience a-work, Heb. vi. 12. *Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promise*. Faith believes the glorious rewards given to suffering. This makes the soul patient in suffering. Thus faith is the master-wheel, it sets all the other graces a-running.

3. As faith is the grace which God honours to justify and save: thus indeed it is *precious faith*, as the apostle calls it, 2 Pet. i. 1. The other graces help to sanctify, but it is faith that justifies, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith*. Repentance or love do not justify, but faith.

Qu. *How doth faith justify?*

Ans. Faith doth not justify, 1. As it is a work, that were to make a Christ of our faith; but faith justifies, as it lays hold of the object, viz. Christ's merits. If a man had a precious stone in a ring that could heal, we say the ring heals; but properly it is not the ring, but the precious stone in the ring heals. Thus faith saves and justifies, but it is not any inherent virtue in faith, but as it lays hold on Christ, so it justifies.

2. Faith doth not justify as it exerciseth grace: it cannot be denied, faith doth *invigorate* all the graces, it puts strength and liveliness into them, but it doth not justify under this notion. *Faith works by love*, but it doth not justify as it works by love, but as it applies Christ's merits.

Qu. *Why should faith save and justify more than any other grace?*

Ans. 1. Because of God's sanction: he hath appointed this grace to be justifying; and he doth it, because faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honour to Christ and free grace, Rom. iv. 20. *Strong in faith, giving glory to God*. Therefore God hath put this honour on faith, to make it saving and justifying. The king's stamp makes the coin pass for current; if he would put his stamp upon leather, as well as silver, it would make it current: so God having put his sanction, the stamp of his authority and institution upon faith, this makes it to be justifying and saving.

2. Because faith makes us one with Christ, Eph. iii. 17. It is the espousing, incorporating grace; it gives us coalition and union with Christ's



Christ's person: other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ.

*1st Use. Of exhortation:* let us above all things labour for faith; *Fides est sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum:* Eph. vi. 16. Above all, taking the shield of faith Faith will be of more use to us than any grace: as an eye, tho' dim, was of more use to an Israelite than all the other members of his body; not a strong arm, or a nimble foot; it was his eye looking on the brazen serpent that cured him. It is not knowledge, tho' angelical, not repentance, tho' we could shed rivers of tears, could justify us; only faith, whereby we look on Christ. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. and if we do not please him by believing, he will not please us in saving of us. Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace; without faith, without covenant; and without covenant, without hope. Eph. ii. 12.

*2d Use, Of trial:* let us try whether we have faith. There is something looks like faith, and is not; a Bristol-stone looks like a diamond. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root and taste. Something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished by the fruits. Let us be serious in the trial of our faith; there is much depends upon our faith: if our faith be not good, there is nothing good comes from us; our duties and graces are adulterate.

Qu. Well then, how shall we know it is true faith?

Ans. By the noble effects: 1. Faith is a Christ-prising grace, it puts an high valuation upon Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. *To you that believe he is precious.* St. Paul did best know Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 1. *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* Paul saw Christ with his bodily eyes in a vision, when he was wrapped up into the third heaven; and saw him with the eye of his faith in the holy supper: therefore he best knew Christ. And see how he styles all things in comparison of him, Phil. iii. 8. *I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ.* Do we set an high estimate upon Christ? could we be willing to part with the wedge of gold for the pearl of price? Greg. Nazianzen blessed God he had any thing to lose for Christ's sake.

2. Faith is a refining grace, 1 Tim. iii. 9. *Mystery of faith in a pure conscience.* Faith is in the soul, as fire among metals; it refines and purifies; morality may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside, Acts xv. 9. *Having*

*purified their hearts by faith.* Faith makes the heart a sacrary or holy of holies. Faith is a virgin-grace; tho' it doth not take away the life of sin, yet love of sin. Examine if your hearts be an unclean fountain, sending out mud and dirt, pride, envy; if there be legions of lusts in thy soul, there is no faith. Faith is an heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil.

3. Faith is an obediential grace, Rom. xvi. 26. *The obedience of faith.* Faith melts our will into God's: faith runs at God's call; if God commands duty (tho' cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys, Heb. xi. 8. *By faith Abraham obeyed.* Faith is not an idle grace; as it hath an eye to see Christ, so it hath an hand to work for him. Faith doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. It is not your having knowledge will evidence you to be believers; the devil hath knowledge, but wants obedience, and that makes him a Devil. And the true obedience of faith is a chearful obedience; God's commands do not seem grievous. Have you the obedience, and obey chearfully? what say you to this? Do you look upon God's commands as your burden, or privilege; as an iron fetter about your leg, or a gold chain about your neck?

4. Faith is an assimilating grace; it changeth the soul into the image of the object, it makes it like Christ. Never did any look upon Christ with a believing eye, but he was made like Christ. A deformed person may look on a beautiful object, but not be made beautiful; but faith looking on Christ transforms a man, and turns him into his similitude. Faith looking on a bleeding Christ, causeth a soft, bleeding heart; looking on an holy Christ, causeth sanctity of heart; looking on an humble Christ, makes the soul humble. As the *camelion* is changed into the colour of that which it looks upon; so faith looking on Christ, changeth a Christian into the similitude of Christ.

3. By the growth of it; if it be a true faith, it grows: living things grow, Rom. i. 17. *From faith to faith.*

Qu. How may we judge of the growth of faith?

Ans. Growth of faith is judged, 1st, By strength. We can do that now, which we could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that he could not do when he was a child; he can carry a heavier burthen: so thou canst bear crosses with more patience.

2ly, Growth

2ly, Growth of faith is seen by doing duties in a more spiritual manner, *viz.* with fervency; we put coals to the incense, from a principle of love to God. When an apple hath done growing in bigness, it grows in sweetness; thou dost duties in love, and now art sweeter, and come off with a better relish.

Obj. *But I fear I have no faith?*

Ans. We must distinguish between weakness of faith, and nullity; a weak faith is true. The bruised reed is but weak, yet it is such as Christ will not bruise. Tho' thy faith be but weak, yet be not discouraged.

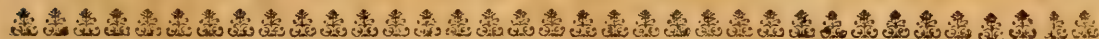
1. A weak faith may receive a strong Christ. A weak hand may tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong; a weak eye might have seen the brazen serpent. The woman in the gospel, that but touched Christ, received virtue from him. The touch of faith.

2. The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, who-

soever hath a giant-faith, that can remove mountains, that can stop the mouths of lions, shall be saved; but whosoever believes, be his faith never so small. Tho' Christ sometimes chides a weak faith; yet, that it may not be discouraged, he makes a promise to it, *Matth. v. 3. Beati qui esuriunt.*

3. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most; the vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith!

4. Weak faith may be growing. The seeds spring up by degrees; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Therefore be not discouraged; God, who would have us receive them that are weak in faith, *Rom. xiv. 1.* will not himself refuse them. A weak believer is a member of Christ; and tho' Christ will cut off rotten members from his body, yet not weak members.



## EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. viii. 30. *Them he also called.*

Q. XX. **W**HAT is effectual calling?

Ans. It is a gracious work of the Spirit, whereby he causeth us to embrace Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

In this verse is a golden chain of salvation, made up of four links; this is one, *vocation*; *Them he also called.* Calling is *nova creatio*, a new creation, the first resurrection.-----There is a two-fold call: 1. An extrinsic or outward call: 2. An intrinsic or inward effectual call.

1. An extrinsic or outward call, which is God's offer of grace to sinners, inviting them to come in and accept of Christ and salvation, *Matth. xx. 16. Many are called, but few chosen.* This outward call shews men what they ought to do in order to salvation, and renders them inexcusable in case of disobedience.

2. There is an intrinsic or effectual call when God with the offer of grace works grace; by this call the heart is renewed, and the will effectually drawn to embrace Christ. The outward call brings men to a profession of Christ, the inward to a possession of Christ.

Qu. What are the means of this effectual call?

Ans. Every creature hath a voice to call us. The heavens call to us to behold God's glory, *Psal. xix. 1.* Conscience calls to us, God's judgments call to us, repent, *Micah vi. 9. Hear ye the rod.* But every voice doth not convert. There are two means of our effectual call:

1. The *Preaching of the word*, which is the sounding God's silver trumpet in men's ears; God doth not speak by an *oracle*, he calls by his *ministers*. *Samuel* thought it had been only the voice of *Eli*, that called to him; but it was *God's voice*, *1 Sam. iii. 6.* So perhaps you think it is only the ministers speak to you in the word, but it is God himself speaks. Therefore *Christ* is said (*now*) to speak to us from heaven, *Heb. xii. 25.* How doth he speak but by his ministers? as a king speaks by his ambassadors: *know*, that in every sermon preached, God calls to you; and to refuse the message we bring, is to refuse God himself.

2. The other means of our effectual call, is

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the



the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the word is the pipe or organ; the spirit of God blowing in it, doth effectually change mens hearts, *Acts* x. 44. *While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word of God.* Ministers knock at the door of mens hearts, the Spirit comes with a key and opens the door, *Acts* xiv. 16. *A certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened.*

Qu. *From what doth God call men?*

Ans. 1. From *sin*; he calls them from their ignorance and unbelief, *1 Pet.* i. 14. By nature the understanding is invloped with darkness, God calls men from darkness to light, *Eph.* v. 8. as if one should be called out of a dungeon to behold the light of the sun.

2. From *danger*. As the angel called Lot out of Sodom, when it was ready to rain fire; so God calls his people from the fire and brimstone of hell, and from all those curses they were exposed to.

3. He calls them out of the world; as Christ called Matthew from the receipt of custom, *John* xvi. 17. *Ye are not of the world.* Such as are divinely called, are not natives here, but pilgrims; they do not conform to the world, or follow its sinful fashions: they are not of the world; tho' they live here, yet they trade in the heavenly country; the world is a place where Satan's throne is, *Rev.* ii. 13. A stage on which sin every day acts its part. Now such as are called, are in, but not of the World.

Qu. *To what God calls men?*

Ans. 1. He calls them to holiness, *1 Thess.* iv. 7. *God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.* Holiness is the livery, or silver-star the Godly wear, *Isaiah* lxiii. 18. *Knam kodshesca, The people of thy holiness.* The called of God are anointed with the consecrating oil of the Spirit, *1 John* ii. 20. *Ye have an unction from the Holy One.*

2. God calls them to glory, as if a man were called out of a prison to sit upon a throne, *1 Thess.* ii. 12. *Who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.* Whom God calls, he crowns; it is a weight of glory, *2 Cor.* iv. 17. The Hebrew word for glory (*Kaud*) signifies pondus, a weight: The weight of glory adds to the worth; the weightier gold is, the more it is worth. And this glory is not transient, but permanent, an eternal weight; 'tis better felt than expressed.

Qu. *What is the cause of the effectual call?*

Ans. God's electing love, *Rom.* viii. 30. *Whom*

*he predestinated, them he also called.* Election is the fountain-cause of our vocation; it is not because some are more worthy to partake of the heavenly calling than others (as the *Arminians*) we were all in our blood, *Ezek.* xvi. 6. And what worthiness in us? What worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast? What worthiness in the *Corinthians*, when God began to call them by his gospel? They were fornicators, effeminate, idolaters, *1 Cor.* vi. 11. *Such were some of you, but ye are washed, &c.* Before effectual calling, we are not only without strength, *Rom.* v. 6. but enemies, *Col.* i. 21. So that the foundation of vocation is election.

Qu. *What are the epithets or qualifications of this call?*

Ans. 1st, It is a powerful call; *verba Dei sunt opera*, Luther. God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to himself; he doth not only put forth his voice, but his arm. The apostle speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power, *he exerciseth towards them that believe*, *Eph.* i. 19. God rides forth conquering in the chariot of the gospel; he conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the will, which stood out as a fort-royal, to yield and stoop to his grace, he makes the stony heart bleed: it is a mighty powerful call. Why then do the *Arminians* seem to talk of a moral persuasion? that God, in the conversion of a sinner, doth only morally persuade, and no more. He sets his promises before them, to allure them to good, and his threatnings to deter them from evil; and here is all he doth. But sure moral persuasions alone are insufficient to the effectual call: how can the bare proposal of promises and threatnings convert a soul? This amounts not to a new creation, or that power which raised Christ from the dead; God doth not only persuade, but enable, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 27. If God, in conversion, should only morally persuade, that is, set good and evil before men, then God doth not put forth so much power in saving men, as the Devil doth in destroying them. Satan doth not only propound tempting objects to men, but doth concur with his temptations; therefore he is said to work in the children of disobedience, *Eph.* ii. 2. The Greek word, to work, signifies *imperii vim*, Cameron, the power Satan hath in carrying men to sin. And shall not God's power in converting, be greater than Satan's power in seducing? The effectual call is mighty and powerful; God puts forth

forth a divine energy, nay, a kind of omnipotency: it is such a powerful call, that the will of man hath no power to resist.

2. It is an high calling, *Phil. iii. 14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God.* It is an high calling, *1st*, because we are called to high exercises of religion; to be crucified to the world, to live by faith, to do angel's work, to love God, to be living organs of his praise, to hold communion with the Father and the Son, *1 John i. 3.*

2ly, It is an high calling, because we are called to high privileges; to justification and adoption, to be kings and priests unto God; *We are called to the fellowship of angels, to be co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17.* They who are effectually called, are candidates of heaven, they are princes in all lands, *Psal. xlv. 16. tho' princes in disguise.*

3ly, It is an immutable call, *Rom. xi. 9. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance;* that is, those gifts that flow from election, (as vocation and justification) these are without repentance. God repented he called *Saul* to be king; but he never repents that he calls a sinner to be a saint.

*Use 1.* See the necessity of the effectual call, a man cannot go to heaven without it. *First*, we must be called before glorified, *Rom. viii. 30.* A man uncalled can lay claim to nothing in the Bible, but threatnings; a man in the state of nature is not fit for heaven, no more than a man in his filth and his rags is fit to come into a king's presence; a man in his pure naturals, is a God-hater, *Rom. i. 38.* and is he fit for heaven? will God lay his enemy in his bosom?

*Use 3. Of Trial.* Whether we are effectually called? we may know it by the antecedent and consequent of it.

1. By the *Antecedent.* Before this effectual call, an humbling work passeth upon the soul: a man is convinced of sin, he sees he is a sinner, and nothing but a sinner; the fallow-ground of his heart is broken up, *Jer. iv. 3.* As the husbandman breaks the clods, then casts in the seed; so God, by the convincing work of the law, breaks a sinner's heart, and makes it fit to receive the seeds of grace. Such as were never convinced, were never called, *John xvi. 8. He shall convince the world of sin.* Conviction is the first step to conversion.

2. By the consequents, two, (1.) He who is savingly called, answers to God's call: when God called *Samuel*, he answered, *Speak, Lord,*

*thy servant heareth,* *1 Sam. iii. 10.* When God calls thee to an act of religion, thou dost run at God's call, *Acts xxvi. 19. I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.* If God calls to duties contrary to flesh and blood, we obey his voice in every thing; true obedience is like the needle which points that way which the loadstone draws. Such as are deaf to God's call, a sign they are not called by grace. (2.) He who is effectually called doth stop his ear to all other calls which would call him off from God. As God hath his call, so there are other contrary calls: Satan calls by a temptation, lust calls, evil company calls: but, as the adder stops its ear against the voice of the charmer; so he who is effectually called, stops his ear against all the charms of flesh and Devil.

*Use 3. Of comfort to them who are the called of God.* This call evidenceth election, *Rom. viii. 30. Whom he predestinated, them he also called.* Election is the cause of our vocation, and vocation is the sign of our election. Election is the first link of the golden chain of salvation, vocation is the second! he who hath the second link of the chain is sure of the first link: as by the streams we are led to the fountain, so by vocation we ascend to election. Calling is an earnest and pledge of glory, *2 Thess. ii. 13. God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification.* We may read God's predestinating love in the work of grace in our heart.

*Branch 2.* To such as are called, to be thankful to God for this unspeakable blessing; be thankful to all the persons in the Trinity, to the Father's mercy, to the Son's merit, to the Spirit's efficacy. To make you thankful, consider, when you had offended God, that he should call you; that, when God needed you not, he had millions of glorified saints and angels to praise him, yet he called you. Again, consider what you were before God called you: you were in your sins; when God called *Paul*, he found him persecuting; when he called *Matthew*, he found him at the receipt of custom; when he called *Zacheus*, he found him using extortion. When God calls a man by his grace, he finds him seeking after his lusts: as when *Saul* was called to the kingdom, he was seeking the asses: that God should call thee when thou art in the hot pursuit of sin, admire God's love, exalt his praise. Again, that God should call you, and pass by others, what mercy



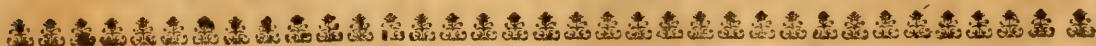
is this? *Matth. xi. 26. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* That God should pass by the wise and noble persons, of sweet disposition, acuter parts, guilty of less vice, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you; O astonishing love of God! It was a great favour of God to *Samuel*, that God called to him, and revealed his mind to him, and passed by *Eli*, tho' a priest and a judge in *Israel*, 1 Sam. iii. 6. so, that God should call to thee, a flagitious sinner, and pass by others of higher birth, and better morals, here is that calls aloud for praise. As God so governs the clouds, that he makes them rain upon one place, and not upon another; so doth he dispense his grace, it shall drop its sweet dew upon one, and not upon another. Two at a sermon, one his heart the Lord opens, the other is no more affected with it, than a dead man with the sound of music: here is the banner of free grace displayed, and here should be the trophies of praise erected. *Elijah* and *Elisha* were walking together; on a sudden there came a chariot of fire, and carried *Elijah* up to heaven, but left *Elisha* behind: so, when two are walking together, husband and wife, father and child, that God should call one by his grace, but leave the other, carry up one in a triumphant chariot to heaven, but let the other perish eternally; O infinite rich grace! how should they that are called be affected with God's discriminating love? how should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? how should they stand upon mount *Gerizim*, blessing and praising God? O begin the work of heaven here! such as are patterns of mercy should be trumpeters of praise. Thus *St. Paul* being called of God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace, breaks forth into admiration and gratulation, 1 *Tim. i. 13.*

Use 4. *To the called.* Walk worthy of your high calling, *Eph. iv. 1. I beseech you, that you*

*walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; in two things.*

1. Walk compassionately. Pity such as are yet uncalled: hast thou a child that God hath not yet called, a wife, a servant? weep over their dying souls; they are in their blood, *under the power of Satan*: O pity them! let their sins more trouble you than your own sufferings: if you pity an ox or ass going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray? Shew your piety by your pity.

2. Walk holily. Yours is an holy calling, 2 *Tim. i. 9.* You are called to be saints, *Rom. i. 7.* Show your vocation by a Bible conversation. Shall not flowers smell sweeter than weeds? shall not they who are ennobled with grace, have more fragrancy in their lives than sinners? 1 *Pet. i. 15. As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* O dishonour not your high calling by any sordid carriage: when *Antigonus* was going to defile himself with women, one told him, *he was a king's son.* O remember your dignity, *called of God! of the blood-royal of heaven*; do nothing unworthy of your honourable calling. *Scipio* refused the embraces of an harlot, because he was general of an army: abhor all motions to sin, because of your high calling. 'Tis not fit for them who are the called of God, to do as others; tho' others of the *Jews* did drink wine, it was not fit for the *Nazarite*, because he had a vow of separation upon him, and had promised abstinence; tho' Pagans and loose Christians take liberty to sin, yet it is not fit for them who are called out of the world, and have the mark of election upon them, to do so: you are consecrated persons, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and your souls must be a sacrary, or holy of holies.



## OF JUSTIFICATION.

*Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his Grace.*

Q. XXI. *WHAT is Justification?*

Ans. It is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardoneth all our sins,

and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of *CHRIST*, imputed to us, and received by faith.

JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION is the very hinge and pillar of CHRISTIANITY; and an error about justification is dangerous, like a crack in the foundation, or an error in the first concoction. Justification by Christ, is a spring of the water of life; and to have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring, is damnable. It was a saying of Luther, that after his death the doctrine of justification would be corrupted. As it hath been in these latter times, the Arminians and Socinians have cast a dead fly into this box of precious ointment.

I shall endeavour to follow the star of scripture to light me through this mysterious point.

Qu. What is meant by justification?

Ans. It is *verbum forense*, a word borrowed from law-courts, wherein a person arraigned is pronounced righteous, and is openly absolved in the court. Thus God, in justifying a person, pronounceth him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

Qu. What is the ground of justification?

Ans. The *causa*, the inward impellent motive or ground of justification is the free grace of God: so in the text, *justified freely by his grace*. Which Ambrose expounds, *not of the grace wrought within us, but the free grace of God*. The first wheel that sets all the rest a-running, is the love and favour of God: *being justified by his grace*; as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace. God doth not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy.

Qu. What is the material cause, or that by which a sinner is justified?

Ans. The matter of our justification, is Christ's satisfaction made to his father. If it be asked, how can it stand with God's justice and holiness, to pronounce us innocent when we are guilty? This answers it, Christ having made satisfaction for our fault, now God may, in equity and justice, pronounce us righteous. It is a just thing for a creditor to discharge a debtor of the debt, when a satisfaction is made by the surety.

Qu. But how was Christ's satisfaction meritorious, and so sufficient to justify?

Ans. In respect of the divine nature: as he was man he suffered, as God he satisfied: by Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied, than if he had suffered the pains of hell for ever.

Qu. Wherein lies the formality or essence of our justification?

Ans. In the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, Jer. xxiii. 6. *This is the name whereby he shall be called Jehovah Tzidkennu, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* 1 Cor. i. 40. *He is made to us righteousness.* This righteousness of Christ, which doth justify us, is a better righteousness than the angels; theirs is the righteousness of creatures, this of God.

Qu. What is the means or instrument of our justification?

Ans. Faith, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith.* The dignity is not in faith as a grace, but relatively, as it lays hold on Christ's merits.

Qu. What is the efficient cause of our justification?

Ans. The whole Trinity, all the persons in the blessed Trinity have an hand in the justification of a sinner: *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. God the Father is said to justify, Rom. viii. 33. *It is God that justifieth.* God the Son is said to justify, Acts xiii. 39. *By him all that believe are justified.* God the Holy Ghost is said to justify, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *But ye are justified by the spirit of our God.* God the Father justifies, as he pronounceth us righteous; God the Son justifies, as he imputes his righteousness to us; and God the Holy Ghost justifies, as he clears up our justification, and seals us up to the day of redemption.

Qu. What is the end of our justification?

Ans. The end is, 1. That God may inherit praise, Eph. i. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace.* Hereby God raiseth the everlasting trophies of his own honour: how will the justified sinner proclaim the love of God, and make heaven ring of his praises?

2. That the justified person may inherit glory, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he justified, them he also glorified.* God, in justifying, doth not only absolve a soul from guilt, but advance him to dignity: as Joseph was not only loosed from prison, but made lord of the kingdom. Justification is crowned with glorification.

Qu. Whether are we justified from eternity?

Ans. No: for, 1. By nature we are under a sentence of condemnation, John iii. 18. But we could not be all condemned, if we were justified from eternity.

2. The scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent, Acts iii. 19. *Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.* Therefore their sins were uncanceled, and their persons unjustified, till they did repent: Though God doth not justify us for our repentance, yet not without



without it. The *Antinomians* erroneously hold, that we are justified from *eternity*: this doctrine is a key which opens the door to all licentiousness; what sins do they care they commit, so long as they hold they are *ab Aeterno* justified, whether they repent or no?

Before I come to the uses, I shall lay down four maxims or positions about *justification*.

*Position 1.* That justification confers a real benefit upon the person justified. The acquitting and discharging the debtor, by virtue of the satisfaction made by the surety, is a real benefit to the debtor: a robe of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness, are real benefits.

*Position 2.* All believers are alike justified: *justificatio non recipit magis & minus*: though there are degrees in grace, yet not in justification; one is not justified more than another, the weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest: *Mary Magdalene* is as much justified as the *Virgin Mary*. This may be cordial-water to a weak believer: though thou hast but a drachm of faith, thou art as truly justified as he who is of the highest stature in Christ.

*Position 3.* Whomsoever God justifies, he sanctifies, *1 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.* The papists calumniate the protestants; they report, we hold that men continuing in sin are justified: whereas all our protestant writers affirm, that righteousness imputed, *viz. Justification*, and *righteousness inherent*, *viz. Sanctification*, must be inseparably united. Holiness indeed is not the cause of our justification, but it is the concomitant; the heat in the sun is not the cause of its light, but it is the concomitant. It is absurd to imagine, that God should justify a people, and they go on in sin. If God should justify a people, and not sanctify them, he should justify a people whom he could not glorify. God, as he is an holy God, cannot lay a sinner in his bosom. The mettal is first refined, before the king's stamp is put upon it: first the soul is refined with holiness, before God puts the royal stamp of justification upon it.

*Position 4.* Justification is *inamissibilis*; it is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost. The *Arminians* hold an apostacy from justification: to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified; to-day a *Peter*, to-morrow a *Judas*; to-day a member of Christ, to-morrow a limb of Satan: a most uncomfortable doctrine. Indeed justified persons may fall from degrees of grace, they may leave their first love, they may lose God's

favour for a time, but not lose their justification. If they are justified, then they are elected; they can no more fall from their justification, than from their election. If they are justified, then they have union with Christ; and, can a member of Christ be broken off? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, then all may; and so Christ should be an head without a body.

*Use 1st.* See from hence, that there is nothing within us could justify us, but something without us; not any righteousness *inherent*, but *imputed*: we may as well look for a star in the earth, as for justification in our own righteousness. The papists say we are justified *by works*: But the apostle confutes it, *not of works, lest any man should boast*, Eph. ii. 9. But the papists say, "the works done by an unregenerate man indeed cannot justify him, but works done by a regenerate man may justify." This is most false, as may be proved both by example and reason.

1. By example. *Abraham* was a regenerate man; but *Abraham* was not justified by works, but by faith, *Rom. iv. 3. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.*

2. By reason. How can those works justify us, which defile us? *Isa. lxiv. 6. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Bona opera non praecedunt justificationem, sed sequuntur justificatum*: good works are not an uther to go before justification, but an handmaid to follow it.

*Obj.* But doth not the apostle *James* say, *Abraham was justified by works*?

*Ans.* The answer is easy: works declare us to be righteous before men, but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are evidences of our justification, not cause. This name only must be graven upon the golden plate of our high priest Christ, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

2 *Use, of exhortation, Branch 1.* Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, to find out such a way to justify us, by *rich grace and precious blood*. We are all involved in guilt; none of us could plead, *not guilty*; and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death: now that the judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid, and not distress the debtor; this may fill us with wonder and love. The angels admire the mystery of free grace in this new way of justifying and saving lost man, *1 Pet. i. 12.* and should not we who are nearly concerned in it, and on whom the benefit is devolved,

devolved, cry out with the apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* &c.

*Branch 2.* Labour for this high privilege of justification: there is *balm in Gilead*; Christ hath laid down the price of our justification, viz. His blood; and he offers himself and all his merits to us, to justify; he invites us to come to him; he hath promised to give his spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will ye not look after this great privilege of justification? Do not starve in the midst of plenty; do not perish when there is a remedy to save you. Would not he be thought to be distracted, if having a pardon offered him, only upon the acknowledgment of his fault, and promising amendment, he should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; for his part, he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? Thou who neglectest justification offered thee freely by Christ in the gospel, art this distracted person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? O then look after justification through Christ's blood!

Consider, 1. *The necessity* of being justified: if we are not justified, we cannot be glorified, *Rom. viii. 30. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.* He who is outlawed, and all his goods confiscated, must be brought into favour with his prince, before he can be restored to his former rights and liberties: so, we must first have our sins forgiven, and be brought into God's favour by justification, before we can be restored to the liberty of the sons of God, and have right to that happiness we forfeited in Adam.

2. *The utility and benefit*: by justification we enjoy *peace* in our conscience; a richer jewel than any prince wears in his crown, *Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with*

*God.* Peace can sweeten all our afflictions, it turns our water into wine: how happy is a justified person who hath the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him? peace flowing from justification, is an antidote against the fear of death and hell. *Rom. viii. 34. It is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth?* Therefore labour for this justification by Christ; this privilege is obtained by believing in Christ, *Acts xiii. 39. By him all that believe are justified.* And *Rom. iii. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.* Faith unites us to Christ; and, having union with his person, we partake of his merits, and the glorious salvation which comes by him.

*Use 3.* Comfort to the justified, (1.) It is comfort in case of failings: alas how defective are the godly! they come short in every duty: but, though believers should be humbled under their defects, yet not desponded; they are not to be justified by their duties or graces, but the righteousness of Christ. Their duties are mixed with sin, but that righteousness which justifies them is a *perfect righteousness*.

(2.) Comfort in case of hard censures: the world censures the people of God for proud and hypocritical, and the troublers of Israel; but though men censure and condemn the godly, yet God hath justified them: and as he hath now justified them, so at the day of judgment he will openly justify them, and pronounce them righteous before men and angels. And God is so just and holy a judge, that having once justified his people, he will never condemn them. *Pilate justified Christ, I find no fault in him;* yet after this he condemned him: but God having publicly justified his saints, he will never condemn them: *whom he justified them he also glorified.*

## OF ADOPTION.

*John i. 12. To them he gave power to become the sons of God.*

**H**AVING spoken of the great points of faith and justification, the next is adoption.

1. *The qualification* of the persons: *As many as received him.* Receiving is put for believing,

as is clear by the last words, *to them that believe in his name.*

2. *The Specification* of the privilege: *to them he gave power to become the sons of God.* The Greek



Greek word for power, *exusta*, signifies dignity and prerogative: he dignified them to become the sons of God.

Our sonship differs from Christ's sonship: Christ was the son of God by eternal generation, a son before time; but our sonship is, 1. By creation, Acts xvii. 28. *We are his offspring*. This is no privilege; men may have God for their Father by creation, yet have the devil for their father.

2. Our sonship is by adoption: so in the text, *he gave them power to become the sons of God*. Adoption is twofold.

(1.) *External and federal*: so those who live in a visible church, and make a profession of God, are sons, Mat. viii. 12. *The children of the kingdom shall be cast out*.

(2.) *Real and gracious*: so they are sons, who are God's favourites, and are heirs of glory. Before I proceed to the questions, I shall lay down three positions.

*Position 1.* Adoption takes in all nations: at first adoption was confined to the people of the Jews, they only were grafted into the true olive, and were dignified with glorious privileges, Rom. ix. 4. *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory*. But now, in the time of the gospel, the charter is enlarged, and the believing Gentiles are within the line of communication, and have a right to the privileges of adoption as well as the Jews, Acts x. 35. *In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with God*.

*Position 2.* Adoption takes in both Sexes, Females as well as males, 2 Cor. vi. 18. *I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters*. I have read, in some countries, females are excluded from the supreme dignity; as by the *Salique law* in France, no woman can inherit a crown: but, if we speak of spiritual privileges, females are as capable as males. Every gracious soul (of whatever sex) lays claim to adoption, and hath an interest in God as a father: *ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*.

*Position 3.* Adoption is an act of pure grace, Eph. i. 5. *Having predestinated us to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will*. Adoption is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace: all by nature are strangers, therefore have no right to sonship; only God is pleased to adopt one, and not another; to make one a vessel of glory, another a vessel of wrath. The adopted heir may cry out,

*Lord, how is it, that thou wilt show thy self to me, and not unto the world?*

*Qu. What this filiation or adoption is?*

*Ans.* Adoption is the taking a stranger into the relation of a son and heir: so *Moses* was the adopted son of king *Pharaoh's* daughter, *Exod.* ii. 10. And *Esther* was the adopted child of her cousin *Mordecai*, *Esther* ii. 7. Thus God adopts us into the family of heaven; and God, in adopting us, doth two things:

1. He enobles us with his name: he who is adopted, bears his name who adopts him, *Rev.* iii. 12. *I will write on him the name of my God*.

2. God consecrates us with his spirit: whom he adopts, he anoints; whom he makes sons, he makes saints. When a man adopts another for his son and heir, he may put his name upon him, but he cannot put his disposition into him; if he be of a morose rugged nature, he cannot alter it; but whom God adopts he sanctifies: he doth not only give them a new name, but a new nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. God turns the wolf into a lamb; he makes the heart humble and gracious; he works such a change as if another soul did dwell in the same body.

*Qu. From what state doth God take us when he adopts us?*

*Ans.* From a state of sin and misery. King *Pharaoh's* daughter took *Moses* out of the ark of bulrushes in the water, and adopted him for her son. God did not take us out of the water, but out of our blood, and adopted us, *Ezek.* xvi. God adopted us from slavery: it is a mercy to redeem a slave, but it is more to adopt him.

*Qu. To what God adopts us?*

*Ans.* He adopts us to a state of excellency. It were much for God to take a clod of dust, and make it a star; it is more for God to take a piece of clay and sin, and adopt it for his heir.

1. God adopts us to a state of liberty; a slave being adopted, is made a free man, *Gal.* iv. 7. *Thou art no more a servant, but a son*.

*Qu. How is an adopted son free?*

*Ans.* (1.) Not to do what he lists: he is freed from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law.

2. He is free in the manner of worship; he hath God's free spirit, which makes him free and cheerful in the service of God; he is joyful in the house of prayer, *Isa.* lvi. 7.

(2.) God adopts us to a state of dignity: God makes us heirs of promise; God installs us into honour, *Isa.* xliii. 3. *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable*. The adopted

adopted are God's treasure, *Exod.* xix. 5. His jewels, *Mal.* iii. 17. His first-born, *Heb.* xii. 23. They have angels for their life-guard, *Heb.* i. 14. They are of the blood-royal of heaven, *1 John* iii. 9. The Scripture hath set forth their spiritual heraldry; they have their escutcheon or coat-armour: sometimes they give the lion for their courage, *Prov.* xxviii. 1. Sometimes the dove for their meekness, *Cant.* ii. 14. Sometimes the eagle for their sublimeness, *Isai.* xl. 31. Thus you see their coat of arms displayed: but what is honour without inheritance? God adopts all his sons to an inheritance, *Luke* xii. 32. *It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.* 'Tis no disparagement to be the sons of God. To reproach the saints, is as if *Shimei* had reproached *David* when he was going to be made king; adoption ends in coronation. The kingdom God gives his adopted sons and heirs, excels all earthly monarchies.

1. In riches *Rev.* xxi. 21. The gates of pearl, and the streets of pure gold, and as it were transparent glass.

2. In tranquillity. It is peaceable, the white lily of peace is the best flower in a prince's crown: *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior*.... No divisions at home, or invasions abroad; no more the noise of the drum or cannon, but the voice of harpers harping, the hieroglyphic of peace, *Rev.* xiv. 2.

3. In stability. Other kingdoms are corruptible; tho' they have heads of gold, yet feet of clay: but this kingdom, into which the saints are adopted, runs parallel with eternity; 'tis a kingdom that cannot be shaken, *Heb.* xii. 28. The heirs of heaven reign for ever and ever, *Rev.* xxii. 5.

Qu. *What is the organical or instrumental cause of adoption?*

Ans. Faith interests us in the privilege of adoption, *Gal.* iii. 26. *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* Before faith be wrought, we are *spiritually illegitimate*, we have no relation to God as a father: an unbeliever may call God *judge*, but not *father*; faith is the filiating grace, it confers upon us the title of sonship, and gives us right to inherit.

Qu. *Why faith is the instrument of adoption, more than any other grace?*

Ans. 1. Faith is a quickning grace, it is the vital artery of the soul, *Hab.* ii. 4. *The just shall live by faith.* Life makes us capable of adoption, dead children are never adopted.

2. Faith makes us *CHRIST's* brethren, and so God comes to be our father.

Use 1<sup>st</sup>, Branch 1. See the amazing love of God in making us his sons. *Plato* gave God thanks that he had made him a man, and not only a man, but a philosopher: but it is infinitely more, that he should invest us with the prerogative of sons. It is love in God to feed us, but more to adopt us, *1 John* iii. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* It is an *ecce admirantis*, a *behold of wonder*.

The wonder of God's love in adopting us, will appear the more if we consider these six things;

1. That God should adopt us when he had a son of his own. Men adopt, because they want children, and desire to have some to bear their name: but that God should adopt us when he had a son of his own, the Lord Jesus; here is the wonder of love. Christ is called *God's dear Son*, *Col.* i. 13. *A Son more worthy than the angels*, *Heb.* i. 4. *Being made so much better than the angels.* Now, when God had a son of his own, such a son, here is the wonder of God's love in adopting us. We needed a Father, but he did not need sons.

2. Consider what we were before God did adopt us: we were very deformed; a man will scarce adopt him for his heir that is crooked and ill-favoured, but that hath some beauty. *Mordecai* adopted *Ester*, because she was fair. But we were in our blood, and then God adopted us, *Ezek.* xvi. 6. *When I saw thee polluted in thy blood, it was the time of love.* God did not adopt us when we were bespangled with the jewels of holiness, and had the angels glory upon us; but when we were black as *Ethiopians*, diseased as lepers, then it was the time of love.

3. That God should be at so great expence in adopting us: when men adopt, they have only some deed sealed, and the thing is effected; but when God adopts, it puts him to a far greater expence, it sets his wisdom a-work to find out a way to adopt us: it was no easy thing to make the heirs of wrath, heirs of the promise. And when God had found out a way to adopt, it was no easy way; our adoption was purchased at a dear rate; when God was about to make us sons and heirs, he could not seal the deed but by the blood of his own son. Here is the wonder of God's love in adopting



us, that he should be at all this expence to bring this work about.

4. That God should adopt his enemies; if a man adopts another for his heir, he will not adopt his mortal enemy; but that God should adopt us, when we were not only strangers, but enemies; here is the wonder of love, for God to have pardoned his enemies, had been much; but to adopt them for his heirs, this sets the angels in heaven a-wondering.

5. That God should take great numbers out of the Devil's family, and adopt them into the family of heaven. Christ is said to bring many sons to glory, *Heb. ii. 10.* Men adopt usually but one heir, but God is resolved to encrease his family, he brings many sons to glory. God's adopting millions, is the wonder of love. Had but one been adopted, all of us might have despaired; but he brings many sons to glory, this opens a door of hope to us.

6. That God should confer so great honour upon us, in adopting us: *David* thought it no small honour that he should be a king's son-in-law, *1 Sam. xviii. 18.* But what honour to be the sons of the high God? And the more honour God hath put upon us in adopting us, the more he hath magnified his love toward us. What honour, that God hath made us so near in alliance to him, sons of God the Father, members of God the Son, temples of God the Holy Ghost? that he hath made us as the angels, *Matth. xxii. 30.* nay, in some sense, superior to the angels: all proclaims the wonder of God's love in adopting us.

*Branch 2.* See the sad condition of such as live and die in unbelief; they are not the sons of God: *To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. No faith, no sonship:* unbelievers have no sign of sonship, they know not God; all God's children know their Father, but the wicked do not know him, *Jer. ix. 3.* *They proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, saith the Lord.* Unbelievers are dead in trespasses, *Eph. ii. 1.* God hath no dead children; and not being children, they have no right to inherit.

*2d Use, Of Trial.* Try whether we are adopted. All the world is divided into these two ranks, either the sons of God, or the heirs of hell, *John i. 12.* *To them he gave power to become the sons of God.* Let us put ourselves on a trial. It is no sign we are adopted sons, because we are sons of godly parents: the Jews

boasted that they were *Abraham's seed, John viii. 33.* they thought they must needs be good, because they came of such an holy line. But adoption doth not come by blood: we see many godly parents have wicked sons; *Abraham* had an *Ishmael*; *Isaac* an *Esau*. The corn that is sown pure, yet brings forth grain with an husk; he who himself is holy, yet the child that springs from his loins is unholy. So that, as *Hierom, non nascimur filii*: we are not God's sons as we are born of godly parents, but by adoption and grace. Well then, let us try if we are the adopted sons and daughters of God.

First sign of adoption, *obedience*. A son obeys his father, *Jer. xxxv. 5.* *I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites, pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine. But they said, we will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine.* So, when God saith, drink not in sin's enchanted cup; an adopted child saith, my heavenly Father hath commanded me, I dare not drink. A gracious soul doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. And true child-like obedience must be regular, which implies three things:

1. It must be done by a right rule: obedience must have the word for its rule; *Lydius lapis, Isa. viii. 20.* *To the law, to the testimony.* If our obedience be not according to the word, it is offering up strange fire; it is will-worship: and God will say, who hath required this at your hand? the apostle condemns worshipping of angels, which had a show of humility, *Col. ii. 18.* The Jews might say, that they were loth to be so bold, as to go to God in their own persons; they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, desiring them to be their mediators to God. Here was a show of humility in their angel-worship; but it was abominable, because they had no word of God to warrant it: it was not obedience, but idolatry. Child-like obedience is that which is consonant to our father's revealed will.

2. It must be done from a right principle, *i. e.* the noble principle of faith, *Rom. xvi. 26.* *The obedience of faith.* ----- *Quicquid decorum est ex fide profisciscitur,* Aug. A crab-tree may bear fruit fair to the eye, but it is sowre, because it doth not come from a good root. A moral person may give God outward obedience, and to the eyes of others it seems glorious; but this obedience is sowre, because it comes not from

from that sweet and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives him the obedience of faith, and that meliorates and sweetens his services, and makes them come off with a better relish, *Heb. xi. 4. By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain.*

3. It must be done to a right end: *Finis specificat actionem*; the end of obedience is glorifying God. That which hath spoiled many glorious services, is, when the end hath been wrong, *Matth. vi. 2. When thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet, as the hypocrites do, that they may have glory of men.* Good works should shine, but not blaze. *If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profits me nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 3.* The same I may say of a sincere aim; if I obey never so much, and have not a sincere aim, it profits me nothing. True obedience looks at God in all, *Phil. i. 20. That Christ may be magnified.* Tho' a child of God shoots short, yet he takes a right aim.

(2.) True child-like obedience is uniform: a child of God makes conscience of one command, as well as another: *Quicquid propter Deum fit, æqualiter fit.*-----All God's commands have the same stamp of divine authority upon them; and if I obey one precept because my heavenly Father commands me, then by the same rule I must obey all: as the blood runs through all the veins of the body, and the sun in the firmament runs through all the signs of the zodiac; so true child-like obedience runs through the first and second table, *Psal. cxix. 6. When I have a respect to all thy commandments.* To obey God in some things of religion, and not in others, shows an unsound heart; like *Esau*, who obeyed his father in bringing him venison, but not in a greater matter, *viz.* the choice of his wife. Child-like obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the loadstone draws. If God calls to duties which are crosses to flesh and blood, if we are children, we obey our father.

Qu. But who can obey God in all things?

Ans. An adopted heir of heaven, tho' he cannot obey every precept perfectly, yet he doth evangelically: 1. He approves of every command, *Rom. vii. 16. I consent to the law, that it is good.* 2. A child of God delights in every command, *Psal. cxix. 97. O how I love thy precepts!* 3. His desire is to obey every command, *Psal. cxix. 5. O that my ways were di-*

rected to keep thy statutes! 4. Wherein he comes short, he looks up to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This is evangelical obedience; which, tho' it be not to satisfaction, it is to acceptance.

(3.) True child-like obedience is constant, *Psal. cvi. 3. Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.* Child-like obedience is not like an high colour in a fit, which is soon over; but like a right sanguine complexion, it abides: it is like the fire on the altar, which was kept always burning, *Lev. vi. 13.*

Second sign of adoption, to love to be in our Father's presence. The child who loves his father, is never so well as when he is near his father. Are we children? we love the presence of God in his ordinances. In prayer we speak to God, in the preaching of his word he speaks to us: and how doth every child of God delight to hear his Father's voice? *Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. My soul thirsteth for thee, to see thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* Such as disregard ordinances, are not God's children, because they care not to be in God's presence: *Gen. iv. 17. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.* Not that he could go out of God's sight, but the meaning is, *Cain went from the church and people of God, where the Lord gave visible tokens of his presence.*

Third sign of adoption, to have the conduct of God's spirit, *Rom. viii. 24. As many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God.* It is not enough that the child have life, but it must be led every step by the nurse: so the adopted child must not only be born of God, but have the manuduction of the Spirit to lead him in a course of holiness, *Hos. xi. 3. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.* As *Israel* were led by the pillar of fire, so God's children are led by the conduct of his Spirit: the adopted ones need God's spirit to lead them, they are apt to go wrong. The fleshly part inclines to sin; the understanding and conscience are to guide the will, but the will is imperious and rebels; therefore God's children need the Spirit to check corruption, and lead them in the right way. As wicked men are led by the evil spirit; the spirit of Satan led *Herod* to incest, *Ahab* to murder, *Judas* to treason: so the good Spirit leads God's children into virtuous actions.

Obj. But enthusiasts pretend to be led by the Spirit, when it is an ignis fatuus, a delusion.

Ans. The Spirit's conduct is agreeable to the word; enthusiasts leave the word, The word



is truth, John xvii. 17. And, *The Spirit guides in all truth*, John xvi. 13. The word's teaching, and the Spirit's leading agree together.

Fourth sign, if we are adopted, we have an entire love to all God's children, 1 *Pet.* ii. 17. *Love the brother-hood.* We bear affection to God's children, tho' they have some infirmities: there are the spots of God's children, *Deut.* xxxii. 5. But we must love the beautiful face of holiness, tho' it hath a scar in it. If we are adopted, we love the good we see in God's children, we admire their graces, we pass by their imprudencies: if we cannot love them because they have some failings, how do we think God can love us? can we plead exemption? By these signs we may know our adoption.

Qu. *What are the benefits which accrue to God's children?*

Ans. They have great immunities: King's children have great privileges and freedoms; they do not pay custom, *Matth.* xvii. 6. God's children are privileged persons, they are privileged from the hurt of every thing, *Luke* x. 19. *Nothing shall by any means hurt you.* Hit you it may, not hurt you, *Psalms* xci. 10. *There shall no evil befall thee.* God saith not, No affliction shall befall his children, but, No evil; the hurt and poison of it is taken away. Affliction to a wicked man hath evil in it, it makes him worse; it makes him curse and blaspheme, *Rev.* xvi. 9. *Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.* But no evil befalls a child of God, he is bettered by affliction, *Heb.* xii. 10. The furnace makes gold purer. Again, no evil befalls the adopted, because no condemnation. *Rom.* viii. 33. *It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?* What a blessed privilege is this, to be freed from the sting of affliction, and the curse of the law? to be in such a condition, that nothing can hurt one? When the dragon hath poisoned the water, the unicorn with his horn doth extract and draw out the poison; so Jesus Christ hath drawn out the

poison of every affliction, that it cannot prejudice the saints.

Second benefit, if we are adopted, then we have an interest in all the promises: the promises are children's bread, *Believers are heirs of the promises*, *Heb.* vi. 17. The promises are sure: God's truth, which is the brightest pearl in his crown, is laid to pawn in a promise. The promises are suitable; like a physic-garden, there is no disease but there is some herb in thy physic-garden to cure it. In the dark of desertion, God hath promised to be a sun; in temptation, to tread down Satan, *Rom.* xvi. 20. *Doth sin prevail?* he hath promised to take away its kingly power, *Rom.* vi. 14. O the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the limbeck of the promises! But who hath a right to these? Believers only are heirs of the promise. There is never a promise in the Bible, but a believer may say, this is mine.

Use ult. Extol and magnify God's mercy, who hath adopted you into his family; who, of slaves, hath made you sons; of heirs of hell, heirs of the promise. Adoption is a free gift. *He gave them power, or dignity, to become the sons of God.* As a thread of silver runs through the whole piece of work, so free grace runs through this whole privilege of adoption. Adoption is a greater mercy than Adam had in paradise; he was a son by creation, but here is a further sonship by adoption. To make us thankful, consider, in civil adoption there is some worth and excellency in the person to be adopted; but there was no worth in us, neither beauty, nor parentage, nor virtue; nothing in us to move God to bestow the prerogative of sonship upon us. We have enough in us to move God to correct us, but nothing to move him to adopt us; therefore exalt free grace, begin the work of angels here: bless him with your praises, who hath blessed you in making you his sons and daughters.

## OF SANCTIFICATION.

1 THESS. iv. 3. *For this is the will of God, even your Sanctification.*

THE notion of the word *sanctification*, signifies to consecrate and set apart to an holy use: thus they are sanctified persons, who are separated from the world, and set apart for God's service. Sanctification hath a privative and a positive part.

1. A *privative* part, mortification, which lies in the purging out of sin. Sin is compared to leaven, which sowres; and to leprosie, which defiles; sanctification doth purge out *the old leaven*, 1 Cor. ix. vii. Though it takes not away the *life*, yet the *love* of sin.

2. A *positive* part, vivification, which is the *spiritual refining* of the soul; which in scripture is called a *renewing of our mind*, Rom. xii. 2. and a *partaking of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. The priests in the law not only were washed in the great laver, but adorned with glorious apparel, *Exod. xxviii. 2.* so in sanctification, not only washed from sin, but adorned with purity.

Qu. *What is sanctification?*

Ans. It is a principle of grace savingly wrought, whereby the heart becomes holy, and is made after God's own heart. A sanctified person bears not only God's *name*, but *image*. For the opening the nature of sanctification, I shall lay down these seven positions.

1. Sanctification is a *supernatural* thing; it is divinely infused. We are naturally polluted; and to cleanse, God takes to be his prerogative; *Lev. xxi. 8. I am the Lord which sanctifieth you.* Weeds grow of themselves. Flowers are planted. Sanctification is a flower of the spirit's planting, therefore it is called *The sanctification of the spirit*, 1 Pet. i. 2.

2. Sanctification is an *intrinsic*al thing: it lies chiefly in the heart. It is called *the adorning the hidden man of the heart*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. The dew wets the leaf, the sap is hid in the root: the religion of some consists only in *externals*, but sanctification is deeply rooted in the soul, *Pf. li. 6. In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

3. Sanctification is an *extensive* thing: it

spreads into the whole man, 1 *Thess. v. 23. The God of peace sanctify you wholly.* As original corruption hath depraved all the faculties, the whole *head is sick, the whole heart faint*, no part sound, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted: so sanctification goes over the whole soul. After the fall, there was ignorance in the mind; now in sanctification, we are *light in the Lord*, Eph. v. 8. After the fall, the will was depraved; there was not only *impotency* to good, but *obstinacy*: now, in sanctification, there is a blessed pliability in the will; it doth symbolize and comport with the will of God. After the fall, the affections were misplaced on wrong objects; in sanctification, they are turned into a sweet order and harmony, the grief placed on sin, the love on God, the joy on heaven. Thus sanctification spreads itself as far as original corruption: it goes over the whole soul; *the God of peace sanctify you wholly.* He is not a sanctified person who is good only in some part, but who is all over sanctified: therefore in scripture, grace is called a *new man*, Col. iii. 10. not a new eye or a new tongue, but a *new man*. A good Christian, though he be sanctified but in part, yet in every part.

4. Sanctification is an *intense* ardent thing. *Qualitates sunt in subjecto intensive*, Rom. xii. 11. *Fervent in spirit.* Sanctification is not a *dead form*, but it is inflamed into zeal. We call water hot, when it is so in the third or fourth degree: he is holy, whose religion is heated to some degree, and his heart boils over in love to God.

5. Sanctification is a *beautiful* thing; it makes God and angels fall in love with us, *Pf. ex. 3. The beauties of holiness.* As the sun is to the world, so is sanctification to the soul, beautifying and bespangling it in God's eyes. That which makes God glorious, must needs make us so. Holiness is the most sparkling jewel in the Godhead, *Exod. xv. 11. Glorious in holiness.* Sanctification is the first fruit of the spirit; it is heaven begun in the soul; sanctification and glory



glory differ only in degree; sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower. Happiness is the quintessence of holiness.

6. Sanctification is an *abiding* thing, 1 John iii. 9. *His seed remaineth in him.* He who is truly sanctified, cannot fall from that state. Indeed seeming holiness may be lost, colours may wash off, sanctification may suffer an eclipse, Rev. ii. 4. *Thou hast left thy first love*: but true sanctification is a blossom of eternity, 1 John ii. 27. *The anointing which we have received abideth in you.* He who is truly sanctified, can no more fall away, than the angels which are fixed in their heavenly orbs.

7. Sanctification is a *progressive* thing, it is growing; it is compared to seed which grows; first the blade springs up, then the ear, then the ripe corn in the ear; such as are already sanctified, may be more sanctified, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Justification doth not admit of degrees; a believer cannot be more elected or justified than he is, but he may be more sanctified than he is: sanctification is still encreasing, like the *morning-sun*, which grows brighter to the full meridian. Knowledge is said to encrease, Col. i. 10. and faith to encrease, 2 Cor. x. 15. A Christian is continually adding a cubit to his spiritual stature. It is not with us as it is with Christ, who received the spirit *without measure*: Christ could not be more holy than he was. But we have the spirit only *in measure*, and may be still augmenting our grace: as Appelles, when he had drawn a picture, he would be still mending it with his pencil. The image of God is drawn but imperfectly in us, therefore we must be still mending it, and drawing it in more lively colours; sanctification is progressive; if it doth not grow, it is because it doth not live. Thus you see the nature of sanctification.

Qu. *What are the counterfeits of sanctification?*

Ans. There is something looks like sanctification, which is not.

1. The first counterfeit of sanctification is *moral virtue*. To be just, temperate, to be of a fair deportment, not having one's scutcheon blotted with ignominious scandal; this is good, but not enough: this is not sanctification. A field-flower differs from a garden flower. 1. heathens have attained to morality; *Cato, Socrates, Aristides*. Civility is but nature refined; there is nothing of Christ there: the heart may be foul and impure: under these fair leaves of

civility, the worm of unbelief may be hid. 2. A moral person hath a secret antipathy against grace; he hates vice, and he hates grace as much as vice. The snake hath a fine colour, but a sting. A person adorned and cultivated with moral virtue, hath a secret spleen against sanctity: those Stoicks, which were the chief of the moralized heathens, were the bitterest enemies St. Paul had, Acts xvii. 18.

2. The second counterfeit of sanctification is *superstitious devotion*: this abounds in popery; adorations; images, altars, vestments, holy water, which I look upon as a religious frenzy: this is far from sanctification. 1. It doth not put any intrinsical goodness into a man, it doth not make a man better. If the legal purifications and washings, which were of God's own appointing, did not make them that used them more holy, (the priests, who wore holy garments, and had oil poured on them, were never the more holy, without the anointing of the spirit) then surely those superstitious innovations in religion, which God never appointed, cannot contribute any holiness to men. 2. A superstitious holiness costs no great labour; there is nothing of the heart in it: if to tell over a few beads, or bow to an image, to sprinkle themselves with holy water; if this were sanctification, and were all that were required of them that should be saved, then hell would be empty, none would come there.

3. The third counterfeit of sanctification is *hypocrisy*; when men make a pretence of that holiness which they have not. A comet may shine like a star; such a lustre shines from their profession, as dazzleth the eyes of the beholders, 2 Tim. iii. 5. *Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power.* These are lamps without oil; whited sepulchres, like the *Aegyptian* temples, which had fair outides, but within spiders and apes. The apostle speaks of true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. implying there is an holiness which is spurious and feigned, Rev. iii. 1. *Thou hast a name to live, but art dead*: like pictures and statues which are destitute of a vital principle, Jude xii. *Clouds without water.* They pretend to be full of the spirit, but empty clouds. This shew of sanctification (when it is nothing else) is self-delusion. He who takes copper instead of gold, wrongs himself; the most counterfeit saint deceives others while he lives, but deceives himself when he dies. To pretend holiness, when there is none, is a vain thing: what were the *foolish virgins* better for their blazing lamps,

lamps, when they wanted oil? What is the lamp of profession without the oil of saving grace? What comfort will a shew of holiness yield at last? Will painted gold enrich? Painted wine refresh him that is thirsty? Will painted holiness be a cordial at the hour of death? *A pretence of sanctification is not to be rested in.* Many ships, that have had the name of the *Hope*, the *Safeguard*, the *Triumph*, yet have been cast away upon the rocks; so many who have had the name of saintship, have been cast into hell.

4. The fourth counterfeit of sanctification is *restraining grace*. When men forbear vice, though they do not hate it; this may be the sinner's motto, *Fain I would, but I dare not.* The dog hath a mind to the bone, but is afraid of the cudgel: men have a mind to lust, but conscience stands as the angel, with a flaming sword, and affrights; they have a mind to revenge, but the fear of hell is a curb-bit to check them. Here is no change of heart; sin is curbed, but not cured; a lion may be in chains, but is a lion still.

5. The fifth counterfeit of sanctification, is *common grace*, which is a slight, transient work of the spirit, but doth not amount to conversion. There is some light in the judgment, but it is not humbling; some checks in the conscience, but they are not awakening: this looks like sanctification, but is not. Men have convictions wrought in them, but they break loose from them again, like the deer, which, being shot, shakes out the arrow: after conviction, men go into the house of mirth, take the harp to drive away the spirit of sadness, and so all dies and comes to nothing.

Qu. *Wherein appears the necessity of sanctification?*

Ans. In six things, 1. God hath called us to it. 2 *Pet. i. 5. Who hath called us to glory and virtue, as well as glory. God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness,* 1 *Thess. iv. 7. We have no call to sin, we may have a temptation, but no call; no call to be proud, or unclean, but we have a call to be holy.*

2. The necessity appears in this: without sanctification there is no evidencing our justification; Justification and sanctification go together, 1 *Cor. vi. 11. But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.* Mic. vii. 18. *Pardoning iniquity, there is justification; v. 19. He will subdue our iniquities, there is sanctification. Out of Christ's sides came water and blood,* 1 *John v. 6. Blood, viz. justifi-*

cation; *water, viz. sanctification.* Such as have not the water out of Christ's sides to cleanse them, shall never have the blood out of his sides to save them.

3. Without sanctification we have no title to the new covenant. The covenant of grace is our charter for heaven: the tenure of the covenant, is, *That God will be our God* (the crowning blessing.) But who are interested in the covenant, and may plead the benefit of it? Only sanctified persons; *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you, and I will put my spirit within you, and I will be your God.* If a man make a will, and settles his estate upon such persons as he names in the will; none else but they can lay claim to the will: so God makes a will and testament, but it is restrained and limited to such as are sanctified; and it is high presumption for any else to lay claim to the will.

4. There is going to heaven without sanctification, *Heb. xii. 14. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* God is an holy God, and he will suffer no unholy creature to come near him; a king will not suffer a man with plague-sores to approach into his presence. Heaven is not like *Noah's ark*, where the clean beasts and the unclean entered; no unclean beast comes into the heavenly ark: though God suffer the wicked to live a while on the earth, he will never suffer heaven to be pestered with such vermine: are they fit to see God, who wallow in wickedness? Will God ever lay such vipers in his bosom? *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* It must be a clear eye that sees a bright object; only an holy heart can see God in his glory. Sinners may see God as an enemy, not as a friend; may have an affrighting vision of God, but not a beatifical vision: they may see the flaming sword, but not the mercy-seat. O then, what need is there of sanctification?

5. Without sanctification, all our holy things are defiled, *Tit. i. 5. Unto them that are defiled, is nothing pure.* Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, had carried a piece of holy flesh in his skirt, the holy flesh had not cleansed him, but he had polluted that, *Hag. i. 12, 13.* An emblem of a sinner's polluting his holy offering. A foul stomach turns the best food into ill humours; an un sanctified heart pollutes prayers, alms, Sacraments. This evinceth the necessity of sanctification: sanctification makes our holy things accepted; an holy heart is the altar which sanctifies the offering; his duties, though



though they are not to satisfaction, yet to acceptance.

6. Without sanctification we can shew no sign of our election, 2 *Theff.* ii. 13. Election is the cause of our salvation, sanctification is our evidence; sanctification is the ear-mark of Christ's elect sheep.

*Qu. What are the signs of sanctification?*

*Ans.* 1. Such as are sanctified, can remember a time when they were unsanctified, *Tit.* iii. 3. We were in our blood, and then God washed us with water, and anointed us with oil, *Ezek.* xvi. Those trees of righteousness that blossom and bear almonds, can remember when they were like Aaron's dry rod, not one blossom of holiness growing: a sanctified soul can remember when he was estranged from God through ignorance and vanity, and when free grace planted this flower of holiness in him.

Second sign of sanctification is the indwelling of the spirit, 2 *Tim.* i. 14. *The holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.* As the unclean spirit dwells in the wicked; and carries them to pride, lust, revenge; the devil hath entered into these swine, *Acts* v. 3. so the spirit of God dwells in the elect, as their guide and comforter. The spirit possesseth the saints. God's spirit sanctifies the fancy, causing it to mint holy thoughts; it sanctifies the will, putting a new bias upon it, whereby it is inclined to good. He who is sanctified, hath the influence of the spirit, though not the essence.

Third sign of sanctification is an antipathy against sin, *Pf.* cxix. 104. an hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it; as a serpent casts its coat, but keeps its sting: but a sanctified person can say, he not only leaves sin, but loaths it. As there are antipathies in nature, between the vine and laurel, so in a sanctified soul there is an holy antipathy against sin; and antipathies can never be reconciled. Because he hath an antipathy against sin, he cannot but oppose it, and seek the destruction of it.

Fourth sign of sanctification is, the *spiritual performance of duties*, viz. with the heart, and from a principle of love. The sanctified soul prays out of a love to prayer, he calls the sabbath a delight, *Isa.* lviii. 13. A man may have gifts to admiration, he may speak as an angel dropped out of heaven, yet may be carnal in spiritual things; his services do not come from a renewed principle, nor is he carried upon the wings of delight in duty. A sanctified soul worships God in the spirit, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. God doth

not judge of our duties by the length, but by the love.

Fifth sign, a *well ordered life*, 1 *Pet.* i. 15. *Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* Where the heart is sanctified the life will be so too; the temple had gold *without*, as well as *within*. As in a piece of coin, there is not only the king's image *within* the ring, but his superscription too *without*; so where there is sanctification, there is not only God's image in the heart, but a superscription of holiness written in the life; some say, they have *good hearts*, but their lives are *vitious*, *Prov.* xxx. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet is not washed from their filthiness.* If the water be foul in the bucket, it cannot be clean in the well, *Pf.* xlv. 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within;* there is holiness of heart; *her clothing is of wrought gold.* Holiness of life. Grace is most beautiful when its light doth so shine, that others may see it; this adorns religion, and makes proselytes to the faith.

Sixth sign, *stedfast resolution.* He is resolved never to part with his holiness; let others reproach it, he loves it the more; let water be sprinkled on the fire, it burns the more. He saith, as *David*, when *Michael* reproached him for dancing before the ark, 2 *Sam.* vi. 22. *If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.* Let others persecute him for his holiness, he saith as *Paul*, *Acts* xx. 24. *None of those things move me: he prefers sanctity before safety, and had rather keep his conscience pure, than his skin whole.* He saith, as *Job*, *my integrity I will hold fast, and not let it go*, ch. xxvii. 6. He will rather part with his life than his conscience.

*Use 1.* See what is the main thing a Christian should look after, viz. sanctification; this is the *unum necessarium*, the one thing needful. Sanctification is our purest complexion, it makes us as the heaven, bespangled with stars; it is our nobility, by it we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature; it is our riches, therefore compared to rows of jewels, and chains of gold, *Cant.* i. 10. It is our best certificate for heaven: what evidence have we else to show? Have we knowledge? So hath the devil: do we profess religion: Satan often appears in *Samuel's* mantle, and transforms himself into an angel of light: but here is our certificate to show for heaven, Sanctification. Sanctification is the first fruits of the spirit; the only coin will pass current in the other world. Sanctification is the evidence of God's love; we cannot

not guess of God's love by giving us health, riches, success, but by drawing his image of sanctification on us by the pencil of the Holy Ghost.

*Branch 2.* It shows the misery of such as are destitute of a principle of sanctification; they are spiritually dead, *Eph. ii. 1. Tho' they breathe, yet they do not live.* The greatest part of the world remain un sanctified, *1 John v. 19.* The world lies in wickedness, that is, the major part of the world. Many call themselves Christians, yet blot out the word saints; you may as well call him a man who wants reason, as him a Christian who wants grace: nay, which is worse, some are buoyed up to such an height of wickedness, that they hate and deride sanctification: 1. They hate it; 'tis bad to want it, it is worse to hate it: they embrace the form of religion, but hate the power. The vulture hates sweet smells, so do they the perfumes of holiness. 2. Deride it; these are your holy ones. To deride sanctification, argues an high degree of atheism, and is a black brand of reprobation: scoffing *Ishmael* was cast out of *Abraham's* family, *Gen. xxi. 9.* such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven.

*Use 2. Of Exhortation.* Above all things pursue after sanctification; seek grace more than gold, *Prov. iv. 14. Keep her, for she is thy life.*

*Qu. What are the chief inducements to sanctification?*

*Ans. 1st,* It is the will of God that we should be holy: in the text, *This is the will of God, your sanctification.* As God's word must be the rule, so his will the reason of our actions: this is the will of God, our sanctification. Perhaps it is not the will of God we should be rich, but it is his will we should be holy. God's will is our warrant.

*2ly,* Jesus Christ hath died for our sanctification. Christ shed his blood to wash off our impurity. The cross is both an altar and laver, *Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity.* If we could be saved without holiness, Christ needed not have died. Christ died, not only to save us from wrath, but from sin.

*3ly,* Sanctification makes us resemble God. It was *Adam's* sin that he aspired to be like God in omniscency, but we must endeavour to be like him in sanctity. It is only a clear glass in which we can see a face; it is only an holy heart in which something of God can be seen;

there's nothing of God to be seen in an un sanctified man: you may see Satan's picture in him: envy is the Devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot; but nothing of God's image can be seen in him. You can see no more of God in him, than you can see a man's face in a glass that is dusky and foul.

*4ly,* Sanctification is that which God bears a great love to. Not any outward ornaments, high blood, or worldly grandeur, draws God's love, but an heart embellished with holiness. Christ never admired any thing, but the beauty of holiness; he slighted the glorious buildings of the temple, but admired the woman's faith, *O woman, great is thy faith; amor fundatur similitudine.* A king delights to see his image upon a piece of coin: where God sees his likeness, there he gives his love. The Lord hath two heavens he dwells in, and the holy heart is one of them.

*5ly,* Sanctification is the only thing doth difference us from the wicked: God's people have his seal upon them, *2 Tim. ii. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* The Godly are sealed with a double seal: 1. A seal of election, *The Lord knoweth who are his:* 2. A seal of sanctification, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* This is the name by which God's people are known, *Isa. lxiii. 18. The people of thy holiness.* As chastity distinguisheth a virtuous woman from an harlot, so sanctification distinguisheth God's people from others, *1 John ii. 27. Ye have received an unction from the holy one.*

*6ly,* It is a shame to have the name of a Christian, yet want sanctity; as to have the name of a steward, and yet want fidelity; the name of a virgin, yet want chastity. It exposeth religion to reproach, to be baptized into the name of Christ, yet unholy; to have eyes full of tears on sabbath, and on a week-day eyes full of adultery, *2 Pet. ii. 14.* To be so devout at the Lord's table, as if men were stepping into heaven; and to profane the week after, as if they came out of hell. To have the name of Christians, yet unholy, is a scandal to religion, and makes *the ways of God evil spoken of.*

*7ly,* Sanctification fits for heaven, *2 Pet. i. 3. Who hath called us to glory and virtue; glory is the throne, and sanctification is the*



step by which we ascend to it. First you cleanse the vessel, and then you pour in the wine; first God cleanseth us by sanctification, and then pours in the wine of glory. Solomon was first anointed with oil, and then he was a king, 1 Kings i. 39. First God anoints us with the holy oil of his spirit, and then he sets the crown of happiness upon our head. Pureness of heart and seeing God are linked together, *Matth. v. 8.*

*Qn. How may sanctification be attained to?*

*Ans.* 1. Be conversant in the word of God, *John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth.* The word is both a glass to shew us the spots of our soul, and a laver to wash them away; the word hath a transforming virtue in it, it irradiates the mind, and consecrates the heart.

2. Get faith in Christ's blood, *Acts xv. 9. Having purified their hearts by faith.* She in the gospel that touched the hem of Christ's garment was healed; a touch of faith purifies. Nothing can have a greater force upon the heart, to sanctify it, than faith; if I believe Christ and his merits are mine, how can I sin against him? Justifying faith doth that in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doth, *it removes mountains*, the mountains of pride, lust, envy. Faith, and the love of sin are inconsistent.

3. Breathe after the Spirit; it is called *the sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. The Spirit sanctifies the heart, as lightning purifies the air, as fire refines metals. *Omne agens generat sibi simile*: The Spirit stamps the impression of its own sanctity upon the heart, as the seal prints its effigies and likeness upon the wax. The spirit of God in a man perfumes him with holiness, and makes his heart a map of heaven.

4. Associate with sanctified persons. They may, by their counsel, prayers, holy example, be a means to make you holy: as the commu-

nion of saints is in our creed, so it should be in our company, *Prov. xiii. 20. He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise.* Association begets assimilation.

5. Pray for sanctification. *Job* propounds a question, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Job xv. 14. God can do it. Out of an unholy heart he can produce grace. O! make David's prayer, *Psal. li. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God.* Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, *Lord, my unsanctified heart pollutes all it toucheth. I am not fit to live with such an heart, for I cannot honour thee; nor die with such an heart, for I cannot see thee. O create in me a clean heart; Lord, consecrate my heart, and make it thy temple, and thy praises shall be sung there for ever.*

*Use 3. Of thankfulness.* Hath God brought a clean thing out of an unclean? hath he sanctified you? wear this jewel of sanctification with thankfulness, *Col. i. 12. Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance, &c.* Christian, thou couldst defile thyself, but not sanctify thyself: but God hath done it; he hath not only chained up sin, but changed thy nature, and made thee as a king's daughter all glorious within. He hath put upon thee the breast-plate of holiness, which, tho' it may be shot at, can never be shot thorow. Are there any here that are sanctified? God hath done more for you than millions: they may be illuminated, but not sanctified. He hath done more for you, than if he had made you the sons of princes, and caused you to ride upon the high places of the earth. Are you sanctified? heaven is begun in you; happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. O how thankful should you be to God! Do as that blind man in the gospel, after he had received his sight, *He followed Christ, glorifying God*, Luke xviii. 43. Make heaven ring of God's praises.

## OF ASSURANCE.

**Q. XXII.** *WHAT are the benefits which flow from sanctification?*

*Ans.* Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the holy Ghost, encrease of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

I. BENEFIT flowing from sanctification, is assurance of God's love.

1 *Pet. i. 10. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* Sanctification is the seed, assurance is the flower which grows out of

of it: assurance is a consequent of sanctification, the saints of old had it, 1 *John* ii. 3. *We know that we know him.* 2 *Tim.* i. 12. *I know whom I have believed;* here was *sensus fidei*, the reflex act of faith: and, *Gal.* ii. 20. *Christ hath loved me.* Here was faith flourishing into assurance. *Aecolampadius*, when he was sick, pointed to his heart, *Hic sat lucis*, Here I have light enough, meaning comfort and assurance.

Qu. 1. *Have all sanctified persons assurance?*

Ans. They have a right to it, and I do incline to believe that all have it in some degree before their last expiring; tho' their comfort may be so strong, and their vital spirits so weak, that they cannot express what they feel. But I dare not positively affirm that all have assurance in the first moment of their sanctification: a letter may be written, when it is not sealed; so grace may be written in the heart, yet the Spirit may not set the seal of assurance to it. God is a free agent, and may give or suspend assurance *pro libito* as he please. Where there is the sanctifying work of the Spirit, he may withhold the sealing work, partly to keep the soul humble; partly to punish our careless walking: we neglect our spiritual watch, grow remiss in duty, and then walk under a cloud; we quench the graces of the Spirit, and God withholds the comforts: and partly to put a difference between earth and heaven. This I the rather speak, to bear up the hearts of God's people, who are dejected because they have not assurance: you may have the water of the Spirit poured on you in sanctification, though not the oil of gladness in assurance; there may be faith of adherence, and not of evidence; there may be life in the root, when there is no fruit in the branches to be seen; so faith in the heart, when no fruit of assurance.

Qu. 2. *What is assurance?*

Ans. It is not vocal, any audible voice, or brought to us by the help of an angel or revelation; assurance consists of a practical syllogism, where the word of God makes the *major*, conscience the *minor*, the spirit of God the *conclusion*. The word faith, *He that fears and loves God, is loved of God*; there is the major proposition: then conscience makes the minor, *But I fear and love God*; then the Spirit makes the conclusion, *Therefore thou art loved of God*. And this is that which the apostle calls, *The witnessing of the Spirit with our spirits, that we are his children*, *Rom.* viii. 16.

Qu. 3. *Whether hath a sanctified soul such an*

*assurance as excludes all doubting?*

Ans. He hath that which bears up his heart from sinking, he hath such an earnest of the Spirit that he would not part with it for the richest prize; but his assurance, tho' it be infallible, it is not perfect. There will be sometimes a trepidation or trembling; he is safe, yet not without fears and doubts; as a ship lies safe at anchor, yet may be a little shaken by the wind. If a Christian had no doubtings, there should be no unbelief in him; had he no doubtings, there would be no difference between grace militant and grace triumphant. Had not *David* his ebblings sometimes as well as flowings? Like the mariner, who sometimes cries out, *stellam video*, I see a star; sometimes the star is out of sight. Sometimes we hear *David* say, *Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes*, *Psal.* xxvi. 3. But at another time he was at a loss, *Psal.* lxxxix. 49. *Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?* And there may fall out an eclipse in a Christian's assurance, to put him upon longing after heaven; then there shall not be the least doubting; then the banner of God's love shall be always displayed upon the soul; then the light of God's face shall be without clouds, and have no sun setting; then the saints shall have an uninterrupted assurance, and be ever with the Lord.

Qu. 4. *What are the differences between true assurance and presumption?*

Ans. 1. They differ in the method or manner of working: divine assurance flows from humiliation for sin (I speak not of the measure of humiliation, but the truth). There are in *Palermo*, reeds growing, in which there is a sugared juice: a soul humbled for sin is the *bruised reed*, in which grows this sweet assurance. God's Spirit is a spirit of bondage, before it be a spirit of adoption; but presumption riseth without any humbling work of the Spirit: *How comest thou by thy venison so soon?* The plow goes before the seed be sown; the heart must be plowed up by humiliation and repentance, before God sows the seed of assurance.

2. He who hath a real assurance, will take heed of that which will weaken and darken his assurance; he is fearful of the *forbidden fruit* he knows, tho' he cannot sin away his soul, yet he may sin away his assurance: but he who hat the *ignis fatuus* of presumption, doth not defiling his garments, he is bold in sin, *Jer.* iii. 4, 5. *Wilt thou not cry unto me, My Father?*



*Behold, Thou hast done evil things as thou cou'dst.* Balaam said, *My God*, yet a forcerer. A sign he hath no money about him, who fears not to travel all hours in the night; a sign he hath not the jewel of assurance, who fears not the works of darkness.

3. True assurance is built upon a scripture-basis; the word faith, *The effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever*, Isa. xxxii. 17. A Christian's assurance is built upon this scripture; God hath sown the seed of righteousness in his soul, and this seed hath brought forth the harvest of assurance: but presumption is a spurious thing, it hath no scripture to shew for its warrant; it is like a will without seal and witnesses, which is null and void in law; presumption wants both the witness of the word, and the seal of the Spirit.

4. Assurance flowing from sanctification always keeps the heart in a lowly posture: Lord, faith the soul, what am I, that, passing by so many, the golden beams of thy love should shine upon me? St. Paul had assurance; is he proud of this jewel? no, *Eph. iii. 8. To me who am less than the least of all saints.* The more love a Christian receives from God, the more he sees himself a debtor to free grace, and the sense of his debt keeps his heart humble; but presumption is bred of pride. He who presumes, disdains; he thinks himself better than others, *Luke xviii. 11. God I thank thee, I am not as other men are, nor as this Publican.* Feathers fly up, but Gold descends; he who hath this golden assurance, his heart descends in humility.

Qu. 5. *What is it may excite us to look after assurance?*

Ans. To consider how sweet it is, and the noble and excellent effects it produceth.

1. How sweet it is. This is the manna in the golden pot; the white stone, the wine of paradise which cheers the heart. How comfortable is God's smile! the sun is more refreshing when it shineth out, than when it is hid in a cloud; it is a prelibation and a foretaste of glory; it puts a man in heaven before his time: none can know how delicious and ravishing it is, but such as have felt it; as none can know how sweet honey is, but they who have tasted it.

2. The noble and excellent effects it produceth. 1. Assurance will make us love God, and praise him. (1.) Love him. Love is the soul of religion, the fat of the sacrifice; and who can love God so, as he who hath assurance?

The sun reflecting its beams on a burning-glass, makes the glass burn that which is near to it: so assurance (which is the reflexion of God's love upon the soul) makes it burn in love to God. St. Paul was assured of Christ's love to him, *Gal. ii. 20. Who hath loved me*; and how was his heart fired with love? he valued and admired nothing but Christ, *Phil. iii. 8.* As Christ was fastened to the cross, so he was fastened to Paul's heart. (2.) Praise him. Praise is the quitrent we pay to the crown of heaven; who but he who hath assurance of his justification, can bless God, and give him the glory of what he hath done for him? can a man in a swoon or apoplexy, praise God that he is alive? can a Christian staggering with fears about his spiritual condition, praise God that he is elected and justified? no, *The living, the living, he shall praise thee*, Isa. xxxviii. 19. Such as are enlivened with assurance, they are the fittest persons to sound forth God's praise.

Effect 2. Assurance would drop sweetness into all our creature-enjoyments: it would be as sugar to wine, an earnest of more: it gives a blessing with the venison: as guilt imbitters our comforts, it is like drinking out of a worm-wood cup; so assurance would indurate and sweeten all. Health, and the assurance of God's love are sweet riches, and with the assurance of a kingdom are delectable: nay, a dinner of green herbs, with the assurance of God's love, is princely fare.

Effect 3. Assurance would make us active and lively in God's service; it would excite prayer, quicken obedience. As diligence begets assurance, so assurance begets diligence. Assurance will not (as the *Papists* say) breed security in the soul, but industry: doubting does discourage us in God's service, but the assurance of his favour breeds joy, *And the joy of the Lord is our strength*, Neh. viii. 10. Assurance makes us mount up to heaven, as eagles, in holy duties; it is like the spirit in *Ezekiel's wheels*, that moved them, and lifted them up. Faith would make us walk, but assurance would make us run: we should never think we could do enough for God. Assurance would be as wings to the bird, as weights to the clock, to set all the wheels of obedience a-running.

Effect 4. Assurance would be a golden shield to beat back temptations: assurance triumphs over temptations. There are two sorts of temptations Satan useth, 1. He tempts to draw us



*us to sin*: now the being assured of our justification would make this temptation vanish. What, *Satan*, shall I sin against him who hath loved me, and washed me in his blood? Shall I return to folly after God hath spoken peace? Shall I weaken my assurance, wound my conscience, grieve my comforter? Avoid *Satan*, tempt no more. 2. *Satan* would make us question our interest in God; he tells us we are hypocrites, and God doth not love us. Now there is no such shield against this temptation as assurance; what, *Satan*, have I a real work of grace in my heart, and the seal of the Spirit to witness it, and dost thou tell me God doth not love me? Now I know thou art an impostor, who goest about to disprove what I sensibly feel. If faith resists the devil, assurance would put him to flight.

*Effect 5.* Assurance would make us contented, though we have but a little in the world: he who hath enough is content; he who hath sunlight, is content, though he want torch-light. A man that hath assurance, hath enough; *in uno salvatore omnes florent gemmæ ad salutem*: He hath the riches of Christ's merit, a pledge of his love, an earnest of his glory, he is filled with the fulness of God; here is my inheritance; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage. Assurance will rock the heart quiet; the reason of discontent, is either because men have no interest in God, or do not know their interest: St. Paul saith, *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. i. 12. There was the assurance of his interest. And, 2 Cor. vi. 10. *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, &c. There was his contentment. Get but assurance, and you will be out of the weekly bill of murmurers, you will be discontented no more. What can come amiss to him that hath assurance? God is his; hath he lost a friend? his father lives; hath he lost his only child? God hath given him his only Son; hath he scarcity of bread? God hath given him the finest of the wheat, the bread of life; are his comforts gone? He hath the comforter; doth he meet with storms on the sea? He knows where to put in for harbour; God is his portion, and heaven is his haven. Thus assurance gives sweet contentment in every condition.

*Effect 6.* Assurance would bear up the heart in sufferings, it would make a Christian endure troubles with patience and cheerfulness. With patience, Heb. x. 36. *Ye have need of patience*. There are some meats (we say) are hard of digestion, and only a good stomach will concoct

them: affliction is a meat hard of digestion, but patience (like a good stomach) will be able to digest it; and whence comes patience but from assurance? Rom. v. 5. *Tribulation worketh patience, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts*, with cheerfulness. Assurance is like the mariner's lantern on the deck, which gives light in a dark night. Assurance gives the light of comfort in affliction, Heb. x. 34. *Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves*, &c. there was assurance. He that hath assurance, can rejoice in tribulation; he can gather grapes of thorns, and honey out of the lion's carcase. Latimer, *When I sit alone, and can have a settled assurance of the state of my soul, and know that God is mine, I can laugh at all troubles, and nothing can daunt me.*

*Effect 7.* Assurance would pacify a troubled conscience: he who hath a disturbed vexatious conscience, carries an hell about him, *Eheu quis intus scorpio!* but assurance cures the agony, and allays the fury of conscience: conscience, that before was turned into a serpent, now is like a bee that hath honey in its mouth, it speaks peace; *tranquillus deus, tranquillat omnia*, Tertull. When God is pacified towards us, then conscience is pacified. If the heavens are quiet, and there are no winds stirring thence, the sea is quiet and calm; so, if there be no anger in God's heart, if the tempest of his wrath do not blow, conscience is quiet and serene.

*Effect 8.* Assurance would strengthen us against the fear of death; such as want it, cannot die with comfort; they are in *æquilibrio*, they hang in a doubtful suspense, what should become of them after death: but he who hath assurance, hath an happy and joyful passage out of the world; he knows he is passed from death to life, he is carried full sail to heaven? Though he cannot resist death, yet he overcomes it.

Qu. 6. *What shall they do that want assurance?*

Ans. 1. Such as want assurance, let them labour to find grace. When the sun denies light to the earth, it may give forth its influence: when God denies the light of his countenance, he may give the influence of his grace.

Qu. *How shall we know we have a real work of grace, and so have a right to assurance?*

Ans. If we can resolve two queries, 1. Have we high apprehensions of Jesus Christ? 1 Pet. ii. 7. *To you that believe he is precious*. Christ is all made up of beauties and delights; our praises fall short of his worth, and is like spreading canyass upon cloth of gold. How precious



precious is his blood and incense? The one pacifies our conscience, the other perfumes our prayers. Can we say we have endearing thoughts of Christ? Do we esteem him our pearl of price, our bright morning-star? Do we count all earthly enjoyments but as dung in comparison of Christ? *Phil. iii. 8.* Do we prefer the worst things of Christ, before the best things of the world; the reproaches of Christ, before the world's embraces? *Heb. xi. 26.* *Quer. 2.* have we the indwelling of the spirit? *2. Tim. i. 14.* *The holy Ghost which dwelleth in us?*

*Quest. How may we know that we have the indwelling presence of the spirit?*

*Ans.* Not by having sometimes good motions stirred up in us by the spirit; it may work in us, yet not dwell: but by the *sanctifying power* of the spirit in our heart: the spirit infuseth *divinam indolem, a divine nature*; it stamps its own impress and effigies on the soul, making the complexion of it holy. The spirit enobles and raiseth the heart above the world. When *Nebuchadnezzar* had his understanding given him, he grazed no longer amongst the beasts, but returned to his throne, and minded the affairs of his kingdom: when the spirit of God dwells in a man, it carries his heart above the visible orbs; it makes him *superna anhelare*, thirst after Christ and glory. If we can find this, then we have grace, and so have a right to assurance.

2. If you want assurance, *wait for it.* If the figures are graven on the dial, it is but waiting a while, and the sun shines: when grace is engraven in the heart, it is but waiting a while, and we shall have the sunshine of assurance. *He that believes, makes not haste, Isa. xxviii. 16.* He will stay God's leisure: Say not, God hath forsaken you, he will never lift up the light of his countenance; but rather say, as the church, *Isa. viii. 17. I will wait upon the Lord, which hideth his face from the house of Jacob.* 1. Hath God waited for your conversion, and will not you wait for his consolation? How long did he come a-wooing to you by his spirit? He waited till his head was filled with dew: he cryed, as *Jer. xiii. 27. Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? O! Christian, did God wait for thy love, and canst not thou wait for his?*

2. Assurance is so sweet and precious, that it is worth waiting for; the price of it is above rubies, it cannot be valued with the gold of *Ophir*. Assurance of God's love is a pledge of election, it is the angels banquet: what other joy have they? As *Micah* said, *Judg. xviii. 24. What have*

*I more; so, when God assures the soul of his eternal purposes of love, what hath he more to give? Whom God kisseth, he crowns. Assurance is the first fruits of paradise: one smile of God's face, one glance of his eye, one crumb of the hidden manna is so sweet and delicious, that it deserves our waiting.* 3. God hath given a promise that we should not wait in vain, *Isa. xlix. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.* Perhaps God reserves the cordial of assurance for a fainting time; he keeps sometimes his best wine till last. Assurance shall be reserved as an ingredient to sweeten the bitter cup of death.

*Qu. 7. How may deserted souls be comforted, who are cast down for want of assurance? They have the day-star of grace risen in their souls; but as Job complains, I went mourning without the sun, Job xxx. 28. They go mourning for want of the sun-light of God's face: their joy is eclipsed, they walk in darkness, and see no light, Isa. 1. 10. How shall we comfort such as ly bleeding in desertion, and are cast down for want of assurance?*

*Ans. 1.* Want of assurance shall not hinder the success of the saints prayers. Sin lived in, doth put a bar to our prayer; but want of assurance doth not hinder prayer; we may go to God still in an humble, fiducial manner. A Christian perhaps may think, because he doth not see God's smiling face, therefore God will not hear him: this is a mistake, *Psal. xxxi. 22. I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes, nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication.* If we pour out sighs to heaven, God hears every groan; though he doth not shew us his face, he may lend us his ear.

2. Faith may be strongest when assurance is weakest; the woman of *Canaan* had no assurance, but a glorious faith; *O woman, great is thy faith, Matth. xv. 28. Rachel* was more fair, but *Leah* was more fruitful. Assurance is more fair and lovely to look upon, but a fruitful faith God seeth it better for us, *John xx. 28. Blessed are they that believe, and feel not.*

3. When God is out of sight, yet he is not out of Covenant, *Pf. lxxxix. 28. My covenant shall stand fast.* Though a wife doth not see her husband's face in many years, yet the marriage-relation holds, and he will come again to her after a long voyage. God may be gone from the soul in desertion, but the covenant stands fast, *Isa. liv. 10. The covenant of my peace shall not be removed.* *Quer. But this promise was made*

made to the Jews, and doth not belong to us. Yes, v. 17. *This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.* This is made to all the servants of God, them that are now living, as well as those that lived in the time of the Jews.

Qu. 8. *What should we do to get assurance?*

Ans. 1. Keep a pure conscience, let no guilt ly upon the conscience unrepented of. God seals no pardons before repentance: God will not pour in the wine of assurance into a foul vessel, *Heb. x. 22. Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.* Guilt clips the wings of comfort: he who is conscious to himself of secret sins, cannot draw near to God in full assurance; he cannot call God father, but judge: keep conscience as clear as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it.

2. If you would have assurance, *be much in the acts of grace,* 1 Tim. iv. 7. *Exercise thyself unto godliness.* Men grow rich by trading; by trading in grace, we grow rich in assurance, 2 Pet. i. 20. *Make your election sure.* How? *Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.* Keep grace upon the wing, it is the lively faith flourisheth into assurance. No man will set up a great sail into a small boat, but in a large vessel: God sets up the sail of assurance in an heart enlarged with grace.

3. If you would have assurance, *cherish the holy spirit of God.* When David would have assurance, he prays, *take not away thy spirit from me,* Ps. li. 11. He knew that it was the spirit only that could make him hear the voice of joy: the spirit is the comforter, he seals up assurance, 2 Cor. i. 22. Therefore make much of the spirit; do not grieve it: as Noah opened the ark to receive the dove, so should we open our hearts to receive the spirit; this is the blessed dove which brings an olive-branch of assurance in its mouth.

4. *Let us ly at the pool of the ordinances,* frequent the word and sacrament, Cant. ii. *He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.* The blessed ordinances are the banqueting-house, where God displays the banner of assurance. The sacrament is a sealing ordinance; Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: so in the holy supper, in the breaking of bread, God makes himself known to us, to be our God and portion.

Qu. 9. *How should they carry themselves who have assurance?*

Ans. 1. If you have assurance of your justification, *Do not abuse assurance.* 1. It is an abusing of assurance, when we grow more remiss in duty; as the musician, having money thrown him, leaves off playing. By remissness, or intermitting the exercises of religion, we grieve the spirit, and that is the way to have an embargo laid upon our spiritual comforts. 2. We abuse assurance, *when we grow presumptuous and less fearful of sin.* What, because his father gives a son an assurance of his love, and tells him he will entail his land upon him, shall the son therefore be wanton and dissolute? This were the way to lose his father's affection, and make him cut off the entail: it was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, *his heart was turned away from the Lord, after he had appeared to him twice,* 1 Kings xi. 7. It is bad to sin, when one wants assurance, but is worse to sin when one hath it. Hath the Lord sealed his love with a kiss? Hath he left a pawn of heaven in your hands, and do you thus requite the Lord? Will you sin with manna in your mouth? Doth God give you the sweet clusters of assurance to feed on, and will you return him wild grapes? It much pleaseth Satan, either to see us want assurance, or abuse it: this is to abuse assurance, when the pulse of our souls beats faster in sin, and slower in duty.

2. If you have assurance, admire this stupendious mercy. You deserved that God should give you gall and vinegar to drink, and hath he made the hony-comb of his love to drop upon you? O fall down and adore his goodness; say, *Lord, how is it that thou shouldst manifest thyself to me, and not to other believers?* those whom thou lovest as the apple of thine eye, yet thou holdest them in suspense, and givest them no assurance of thy love; though thou hast given them the pew name, yet not the white-stone; though they have the seed of grace, yet not the oil of gladness; though they have the Holy Ghost the sanctifier, yet not the Holy Ghost the comforter. Lord, whence is it that thou shouldst manifest thyself to me, and make thy golden beams of assurance shine upon my soul? O admire God! this will be the work of heaven.

3. *Let your hearts be endeared in love to God.* If God gives his people correction, they must love him; much more when he gives them assurance. Ps. xxxi. 23. *O love the Lord, ye his saints.* Hath God brought you to the borders of Canaan, given you a bunch of grapes, crowned



you with loving-kindness, confirmed your pardon under the broad-seal of heaven? How can you be frozen at such a fire? How can you choose but be turned into seraphims burning in divine love? Say, as *Austin, animam meam in odio haberem*, I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving God. Give God the cream and quintessence of your love, and shew your love by being willing to lose all for his sake.

4. If you have assurance, *improve it for God's glory*, several ways: 1. By encouraging such as are yet unconverted; tell them how sweet this hidden manna is; tell them what a good master you serve, what vails you have had; tell them, God hath carried you to the hill of myrrhe, to the mountains of spices: he hath given you not only a prospect of heaven, but an earnest to persuade sinners, by all the love and mercy of God, that they would enroll their names in his family, and cast themselves upon him for salvation; tell them, God hath met with you, and unlock'd the secrets of free grace, and assured you of a land flowing with those infinite delights which eye hath not seen. Thus, by telling others what God hath done for your soul, you may make them in love with the ways of God, and cause them to turn proselytes to religion. 2. *Improve assurance, by comforting such as want it*: Be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds. You who have assurance, are gotten as it were to the haven; you are sure of your happiness: but do you not see others who are struggling with the waves of temptation and desertion, and are ready to sink? O now sympathize with them, and do what you can to comfort them when they are in this deep ocean, 2 Cor. i. 6. *Whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation*. The comfortable experience of one Christian, being communicated to another doth much revive and bear up his fainting heart: *our comfort*, saith the apostle, *is for your consolation*. 3. *Improve assurance, by walking more heavenly*. You should scorn these things below; you who have an earnest of heaven, should not be too earnest for the earth: you have angels food; and it becomes not you with the serpent to lick the dust. The wicked are all for corn, wine and oil; but you have that which is better: God hath lifted up the light of his countenance; will you hanker after the world, when you have been feeding upon the grapes and pomegranates of the holy land? Do you now lust after the garlic and

onions of Egypt? When you are clothed with the sun, will you set the moon and stars above you? O let them scrabble for the world, who have nothing else but hulks to feed on. Have you assurance of heaven, and is not that enough? Will not a kingdom satisfy you? Such as are high in assurance, should be in the altitudes, live above the world. 4. *Improve assurance by a cheerful walking*: It is for condemned persons to go hanging down their heads: but hast thou thy absolution? Doth thy God smile on thee? Cheer up, 2 Sam. xiii. 4. *Why art thou, being the king's son, lean?* Art thou the king's son? Hath God assured thee of adoption? And art thou sad? Assurance should be an antidote against all trouble: what though the world hate thee? Yet thou art assured that thou art one of God's favourites. What though there is but little oil in the cruise, and thou art low in the world? Yet thou art high in assurance: O then rejoice! How musical is the bird? How doth it chirp and sing, that knows not where to pick up the next crumb! and shall they be sad and discontented, who have God's bond to assure them of their daily bread, and his love to assure them of heaven? But certainly those who have assurance, cannot but be of a sanguine complexion.

5. If you have an assurance of salvation, let this make you long after a glorified state: he who hath an earnest in his hand, desires the whole sum to be paid: that soul who hath tasted how sweet the Lord is, should long for a fuller enjoyment of him in heaven. Hath Christ put this ring of assurance on thy hand, and so espoused thee to himself? How shouldst thou long for the marriage-supper of the lamb? Rev. xix. 9. O Christian, think with thyself, if a glimpse of heaven, a smile of God's face be so sweet, what will it be to be ever sunning thyself in the light of God's countenance! certainly, you who have an assurance of your title to heaven, cannot but desire possession. Be content to live, but willing to die.

6. If you have assurance, be careful you do not lose it; keep it; for it is your life, viz. *Bene esse*, the comfort of your life. Keep assurance, 1st, By prayer, Ps. xxxvi. 10. *O continue thy loving-kindness*: Lord, continue assurance; do not take away this privy-seal from me. 2dly, Keep assurance by humility: pride estrangeth God from the soul; when you are high in assurance, be low in humility. St. Paul had

had assurance, and he baptizeth himself with this name, *Chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. The jewel of assurance is best kept in the cabinet of an humble heart.



## OF P E A C E.

1 PET. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and Peace be multiplied.*

HAVING spoken of the first fruit of sanctification, assurance; I proceed to the second, *viz. peace, Peace be multiplied.*

Qu. *What are the several species or kinds of peace?*

Ans. Peace, in scripture, is compared to a river, *Isa. lxvi. 12.* this river parts itself into two silver streams.

1st, There is an external peace, and that is either, 1. *OEconomical*, peace in a family. 2. *Political*, peace in the state. Peace is the nurse of plenty, *Psal. cxlvii. 14.* *He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.* How pleasant is it when the waters of blood begin to assuage, and we can see the windows of our ark open, and the dove returning with an olive-branch of peace? 3. *Ecclesiastical* peace, peace in the church. 'Tis unity in Trinity is the greatest mystery in heaven, and unity in verity the greatest mystery on earth. Peace ecclesiastical stands in opposition to schism and persecution.

2dly, *A spiritual peace*, which is twofold; peace above us, or peace with God; and peace within us, or peace with conscience: this is *superlative*; other peace may be *lasting*, but this is *everlasting*.

Qu. 2. *Whence comes this peace?*

Ans. This peace hath the whole Trinity for its author. (1.) God the Father is the *God of peace*, 1 Thess. v. 23. (2.) God the Son is the *prince of peace*, *Isa. ix. 6.* (3.) Peace is said to be the *fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22.

1. God the Father is the *God of peace*. As he is the God of order, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. so the God of peace, *Phil. iv. 9.* This was the form of the priest's blessing the people, *Numb. vi. 26.* *The Lord give thee peace.*

2. God the Son is the *purchaser of peace*. He had made peace by his blood, *Col. i. 20.* *Having made peace by the blood of his cross.* The atonement Aaron made for the people,

when he entered into the *holy of holies* with blood, was a type of Christ our high priest, who hath by his sacrifice pacified his angry Father, and made atonement for us. Christ purchased our peace upon hard terms; his soul was in an agony, while he was travelling to bring forth peace to the world.

3. Peace is a *fruit of the Spirit*. He seals up peace to the conscience; the Spirit clears up the work of grace in the heart, from whence ariseth peace. There was a well of water, near Hagar, but she did not see it, therefore wept. A Christian hath grace, but doth not see it, therefore weeps. Now the Spirit discovers this well of water, it enables conscience to witness to a man that he hath the real work of grace, and so peace flows into the soul. Thus you see whence this peace comes, the Father decrees it, the Son purchaseth it, the Holy Ghost applies it.

Qu. 3. *Whether such as are destitute of grace may have peace?*

Ans. No. Peace flows from sanctification; but they, being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace, *Isa. lvii. 21.* *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* They may have a truce, but no peace. God may forbear the wicked a while, and stop the roaring of his cannon; but tho' there be a truce, yet no peace. The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not. They may be fearless and stupid; but there is a great difference between a stupified conscience, and a pacified conscience, *Luke xi. 21.* *When a strong man keeps his palace, his goods are in peace.* This is the Devil's peace; he rocks men in the cradle of security; he cries, *peace, peace*, when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace a sinner hath, is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but the ignorance of his danger.

Qu. 4. *What are the signs of a false peace?*

U

Ans. 1.



*Ans.* 1. A false peace hath much confidence in it, but this confidence is conceit. The sinner doth not doubt of God's mercy; from which presumptuous confidence ariseth some kind of quiet in the mind. The same word in the *Hebrew, casual*, signifies both *confidence* and *folly*. Indeed, a sinner's confidence is folly; how confident were the foolish virgins?

2. False peace separates those things which God hath joined together: God joins holiness and peace, but he who hath a false peace separates these two. He lays claim to peace, but banisheth holiness, *Deut. xxix. 19. I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst*. The wicked are loose and vain, and yet thank God that they have peace: a delusion. You may as well suck health out of poison, as peace out of sin.

3. False peace is not willing to be tried; a sign they are bad wares which will not endure the light; a sign a man hath stolen goods, when he will not have his house searched. A false peace cannot endure to be tried by the word: the word speaks of an humbling and refining work upon the soul before peace; false peace cannot endure to hear of this; the least trouble will shake this peace; it will end in despair. In a false peace, conscience is asleep; but, when this lyon of conscience shall be awakened at death, then it will roar upon a man, he will be a terror to himself, and be ready to lay violent hands upon himself.

*Qu. 5. How shall we know that ours is a true peace?*

*Ans.* 1. True peace flows from union with Christ; *Communio fundatur in unione*. The graft or cion must first be inoculated into the tree, before it can receive sap and nourishment from it; so we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can receive peace from him. Have we faith? By holiness we are made like Christ; by believing we are made one with Christ, and being in Christ we have peace, *John xvi. 33*.

2. True peace flows from subjection to Christ; where Christ gives peace, there he sets up his government in the heart, *Isa. ix. 7. Of his government and peace there shall be no end*. Christ is called a priest upon his throne, *Zech. vi. 13*. Christ as a priest makes peace; but he will be a priest upon his throne, he brings the heart in subjection to him. If Christ be our peace, he is our prince, *Isa. ix. 6*.

Whenever Christ pacifies the conscience, he subdues the lust.

3. True peace is after trouble. First, God lets loose a spirit of bondage, he convinceth and humbleth the soul; then he speaks peace. Many say they have peace, but is this peace before a storm, or after it? True peace is after trouble. First there was the earthquake, and then the fire, and then the still, small voice, *1 Kings xix. 11*. Thou who never hadst any legal bruising, mayst suspect thy peace; God pours the golden oil of peace into broken hearts.

*Qu. 6. Whether have all sanctified persons this peace?*

*Ans.* They have a title to it; they have the ground of it; grace is the seed of peace, and it will in time turn to peace; as the blossoms of a tree to fruit, milk to cream. They have a promise of it, *Psal. xxix. 21. The Lord will bless his people with peace*: they may have peace with God, tho' not peace in their own conscience; they have the initials and beginnings of peace. There is a secret peace the heart hath in serving God; such meltings and enlargements in duty as do revive the soul, and bear it up from sinking.

*Qu. 7. But why have not all believers the full enjoyment and possession of peace? why is not this flower of peace fully ripe and blown?*

*Ans.* Some of the godly may not have so full a degree of peace, 1. Through the fury of temptation; the Devil, if he cannot destroy us, he will disturb us: Satan disputes against our adoption; he would make us question the work of grace in our hearts, and so troubles the water of our peace: Satan is like a subtil cheater, who, if he cannot make a man's title to his land void, yet he will put him to many troublesome suits in law. If Satan cannot make us ungodly, he will make us unquiet: violent winds make the sea rough and stormy; the winds of temptation blowing, disturb peace of spirit, and put the soul into a commotion.

2. The godly may not enjoy peace, through mistake and misapprehension about sin. They find so much corruption, that sure, if there were grace, there would not be such strong workings of corruption: whereas this should be so far from discouraging Christians, and hindering their peace, that it is an argument for them. Let me ask, *Whence is it that you feel sin?* No man can feel sin, but by grace. A wicked

wicked man is unsensible: lay an hundred weight upon a dead man, he doth not complain: but the being sensible of corruption, argues a gracious principle, *Rom. vii. 21.* Again, *Whence is it that there is a combat with sin, but from the life of grace?* *Gal. v. 17.* Dead things cannot combat. Whence is it that the saints weep for sin? what are these tears but seeds of faith? The not understanding of this, hinders a Christian's peace. 3. The godly may not enjoy peace, through remissness in duty; they leave their first love. When Christians abate their fervency, God abates their peace: if you slacken the strings of a viol, the music is spoiled; if a Christian slacken in duty, they spoil the sweet music of peace in their souls. As the fire decays, so the cold increaseth; as fervency in duty abates, so our peace cools.

*Use.* Labour for this blessed peace, peace with God and conscience. Peace with neighbour-nations is sweet, *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior.* The Hebrew word *shalom*, peace, comprehends all blessings, it is the glory of a kingdom; a prince's crown is more beautiful when it is hung with the white lily of peace, than when it is set with the red roses of a bloody war. O then, how sweet is peace of conscience? It is a bulwark against the enemy, *Phil. 4. 7.* it shall keep you as in a garrison; you may throw out the gantlet, and bid defiance to the enemies: it is the golden pot and the manna; it is the first-fruits of paradise. It is *still music*; for want of this a Christian is in continual fear, he doth not take that comfort in ordinances. *Hannah* went up to the feast at *Jerusalem*, but she wept, and did not eat, *1 Sam. i. 7.* So, a poor, dejected soul goes to an ordinance, but doth not eat of the feast; he weeps, and doth not eat. He cannot take that comfort in worldly blessings, health, estate, relations; he wants that inward peace, which should be a sauce to sweeten his comforts. O therefore labour for this blessed peace. Consider the noble and excellent effects of it. 1. It gives boldness at the throne of grace: guilt of conscience clips the wings of prayer, it makes the face blush, and the heart faint: but when a Christian hath some lively apprehension of God's love, and the Spirit whispering peace, then he goes to God with boldness, as a child to his father, *Psal. xxv. 1.* *Unto thee, O Lord, I lift my soul.* Time was when *David's* soul was bowed down, *Psal. xxxviii. 6.* *I am bowed*

*down greatly:* but now the case is altered, he will lift up his soul to God in a way of triumph; whence was this? God had spoken peace to his soul, *Psal. xxvi. 3.* *Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes.* 2. This divine peace fires the heart with love to Christ. Peace is the result of pardon; he who hath a pardon sealed, cannot chuse but love his prince. How endeared is Christ to the soul! Now Christ is precious indeed. O, saith the soul, *how sweet is the rest of Sharon?* *Hath Christ waded through a sea of blood and wrath, to purchase my peace?* *Hath he not only made peace, but spoke peace to me?* *How should my heart ascend in a fiery chariot of love!* *How willing should I be to do and suffer for Christ?* 3. This peace quiets the heart in trouble, *Mic. v. 5.* *This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and tread in our palaces.* The enemy may invade our palaces, but not our peace; this man Christ shall be the peace. When the head akes, the heart may be well; when worldly troubles assault a Christian, his mind may be in peace and quiet, *Psal. iv. 8.* *I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.* 'Twas now a sad time with *David*, he was fleeing for his life from *Abshalom*; it was no small affliction to think that his own son should seek to take away his father's life and crown: *David* wept and covered his face, *2 Sam. 1. 38.* Yet at this time, saith he, *I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.* He had trouble from his son, but peace from his conscience; *David* could sleep upon the soft pillow of a good conscience; this is a peace worth getting.

Qu. 8. *What shall we do to attain this blessed peace?*

Ans. 1. Let us ask it of God; he is the God of peace, he beats back the roaring lion, he stills the raging of conscience; if we could call the angels out of heaven, they could not speak peace without God. The stars cannot make day without the sun; none can make day in a dark deserted soul, but the sun of righteousness. As the wilderness cannot water itself, but remains dry and parched till the clouds drop their moisture; so our hearts cannot have peace, till he infuse it and drop it upon us by his Spirit. Therefore pray, *Lord, thou who art the God of peace, thou who art the prince of peace, command it. Give me that peace which may sweeten trouble, yea, the bitter cup of death.*

2. If you would have peace, make war with



sin; sin is the *Achan* that troubles us, the *Trojan horse*, 2 Kings ix. 22. *When Joram saw Jehu, he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?* What peace as long as sin remains unmortified? if you would have peace with God, break the league with sin; give battle to sin, it is a most just war, God hath proclaimed it: nay, he hath promised us victory, *Sin shall not have dominion*, Rom. vi. No way to peace, but by maintaining a war with sin. *Pax nostra bellum contra daemones*, Tert. When *Samson* had slain the lion, there came honey out of the lion: by slaying sin, we get this honey of peace.

3. Go to Christ's blood for peace. Some go to fetch their peace from their own righteousness, not Christ's, they go for peace to their holy life, not Christ's death; if conscience be troubled, they strive to quiet it with their duties. This is not the right way to peace: duties must not be neglected, nor yet idolized. Look up to the blood of sprinkling, *Heb. xii. 24.* That blood of Christ which pacified God, must pacify conscience; Christ's blood being sucked in by faith, gives peace, *Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* No balm to cure a wounded conscience, but the blood of Christ.

4. Walk closely with God. Peace flows from purity, *Gal. vi. 16. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.* In the text, grace and peace are put together; grace is the root, and peace is the flower. As balm-

water drops from the limbeck, so divine peace comes out of the limbeck of a gracious heart. Walk very holily; God's spirit is first a refiner before a comforter.

*Branch 2.* You who have this peace, peace above, peace within, labour to keep it; it is a precious jewel, do not lose it: 'Tis sad to have the league of national peace broken, but it is worse to have the peace of conscience broken: Oh preserve this peace. *First*, take heed of relapses: hath God spoken peace? do not turn again to folly, *Psal. lxxxv. 8.* Besides the ingratitude, there's folly in relapses. It was long ere God was reconciled, and the breach made up; and will you again eclipse and forfeit your peace? hath God healed the wound of conscience, and will you tear it open again? will you break another vein? will you cut a new artery? this is returning indeed to folly. What madness is it to meddle again with that sin, which will breed the worm of conscience! *Secondly*, Make up your spiritual accounts daily; see how matters stand between God and your souls, *Psal. lxxvii. 6. I commune with my own heart.* Often reckonings keep God and conscience friends; do with your hearts as you do with your watches, wind them up every morning by prayer, and at night examine whether your hearts have gone true all that day, whether the wheels of your affections have moved swiftly toward heaven: Oh call yourselves often to account; keep your reckonings even, and that is the way to keep your peace.



## O F J O Y.

*GAL. v. 22. The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy.*

**T**HE third fruit of justification, adoption, and sanctification, is joy in the Holy Ghost. Joy is the setting the soul upon the top of a pinnacle, 'tis the cream of the sincere milk of the word.

*Qu. What is this joy?*

*Ans.* Spiritual joy is a sweet and delightful passion, arising from the apprehension and feeling of some good, whereby the soul is sup-

ported under present troubles, and fenced against future fear.

1. *It is a delightful passion.*] So it is contrary to sorrow, which is a perturbation of mind, whereby the heart is perplexed and cast down. Joy is a sweet and pleasant affection, which eases the mind, exhilarates and comforts the spirits.

2. *It ariseth from the feeling of some good.*]

Joy

Joy is not a fancy, or bred of conceit; but is rational, and ariseth from the feeling of some good, *viz.* the sense of God's love and favour. Joy is so real a thing, that it makes a sudden change in a person; it turns mourning into melody. As in the spring-time, when the sun comes to our horizon, it makes a sudden alteration in the face of the universe, the birds sing, the flowers appear, the fig-tree puts forth her green figs; every thing seems to rejoice and put off its mourning, as being revived with the sweet influence of the sun; so, when the sun of righteousness ariseth on the soul, it makes a sudden alteration, and the soul is infinitely rejoiced with the golden beams of God's love.

3. *By it the soul is supported under present troubles.* Joy stupifies and swallows up troubles; it carries the heart above them, as the oil swims above the water.

4. *The heart is fenced against future fear.* Joy is both a cordial and an antidote; it is a cordial which gives present relief to the spirits when they are sad; and an antidote, it fenceth off fear of approaching danger, *Pf. xxiii. 4. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.*

*Qu. How is this joy wrought?*

*Ans.* It ariseth purely from the promise: as the bee lies at the breast of the flower, and sucks out the sweetness of it; so faith lies at the breast of a promise, and sucks out the quintessence of joy, *Pf. xciv. 19. Thy comforts delight my soul*; that is, the comforts which distill from the limbeck of the promises.

2. The spirit of God (who is called *the comforter*, *John xiv. 26.*) doth sometimes drop in this golden oil of joy into the soul; the spirit whispers to a believer the remission of his sin, and sheds God's love abroad into the heart, *Rom. v. 5.* whence flows infinite joy and delight.

*Qu. 3. What are the seasons when God doth usually give his people these divine joys?*

*Ans.* Five seasons; 1<sup>st</sup>, Sometimes at the blessed supper; the soul oft comes weeping after Christ in the sacrament, and God sends it away weeping for joy. The Jews had a custom at their feasts, they poured ointment on their guests, and kissed them; in the Eucharist, God often pours the oil of gladness on the saints, and kisseth them with the kisses of his lips. There are two grand ends of the sacrament, the strengthening of faith, and the flourishing of joy: here in this ordinance, God displays the banner of his love; here believers taste not only

sacramental bread, but hidden manna. [Caution, not that God always meets the soul with joy.] He may give increase of grace, when not increase of joy; but oftentimes he pours in the oil of gladness, and gives the soul a privy-seal of his love; as Christ made himself known in the breaking of bread.

2<sup>d</sup>. *Season.* Before God calls his people to suffering, *Acts xxiii. 11. Be of good cheer Paul.* When God was about to give Paul a cup of blood to drink, he spiced it with joy, *2 Cor. i. 5. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth*: this made the martyrs flames, beds of roses; when Stephen was stoning, he saw heaven open, and the sun of righteousness shined in his face. God candies our wormwood with sugar.

3<sup>d</sup>. *Season.* After sore conflicts with Satan. Satan is the red dragon who troubleth the waters; he puts the soul into frights, makes it believe that it hath no grace, and that God doth not love it; though Satan cannot blot out a Christian's evidence, yet he may cast such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read it. Now, when the soul hath been bruised with temptations, God will comfort this bruised reed: he now gives joy, *ad corroborandum titulum*, to confirm a Christian's title to heaven. After Satan's fiery darts, comes the white stone; no better balm to heal a tempted soul, than the oil of gladness: as after Christ was tempted, then came an angel to comfort him.

4<sup>th</sup>. *Season.* After desertion: desertion is a poisoned arrow shoots to the heart, *Job vi. 4.* God is called a fire and a light: the deserted soul feels the fire, but doth not see the light; it cries out, as *Asaph, Pf. lxxvii. 8. Is his mercy clean gone?* Now, when the soul is in this case, and ready to faint away in despair, God shines upon the soul, and gives it some apprehension of his favour, and turns the shadow of death into the light of the morning. God keeps his cordials for a time of fainting. Joy after desertion is like a resurrection from the dead.

5<sup>th</sup>. *Season.* At the hour of death, such as have had no joy in their life-time, God puts in this sugar in the bottom of the cup, to make their death sweet. Now at the last hour, when all other comforts are gone, God sends the comforter; and when their appetite to meat fails, God feeds them with hidden manna. Sure, as the wicked, before they die, have some apprehensions of hell and wrath in their conscience; so the godly have some fore-tastes of God's everlasting



everlasting favour, though sometimes their diseases may be such, and their animal spirits so oppressed, that they cannot express what they feel. *Jacob* laid himself to sleep on a stone, where he saw a vision, a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending; so, when the saints lay themselves down to sleep the sleep of death, they have often a vision; they see the light of God's face, and have the evidences of his love sealed up to them for ever.

Qu. 4. *What are the differences between worldly joys and spiritual?*

Ans. The gleanings of the one are better than the vintage of the other.

(1.) Spiritual joys help to make us better, worldly joys do often make us worse, *Jer. xxii. 21. I speak to thee in thy prosperity and thou saidst, I will not hear.* Pride and luxury are the two worms bred of worldly pleasures, *Hes. iv. 12. Wine takes away the heart*; it is *fomentum libidinis*, Aug. the inflamer of lust. As Satan entered in the sop, so often in the cup: but spiritual joy makes one better; it is like cordial water, which (as physicians say) doth not only cheer the heart, but purges out the noxious humours; so divine joy is cordial water, which doth not only comfort, but cleanse; it makes a Christian more holy; it causeth an antipathy against sin; it infuseth strength to do and suffer, *Neb. viii. 10. The joy of the Lord is your strength.* As some colours do not only delight the eye, but strengthen the sight; so the joys of God do not only refresh the soul, but strengthen it, *The joy of the Lord is your strength.*

(1.) Spiritual joys are inward, they are heart-joys, *John xvi. 22. Your heart shall rejoice.* *Seneca* saith, true joy latet in profundo, it is hidden within, worldly joy is in superficie, it lies in the outside, like the dew that wets the leaf, *2 Cor. v. 12. who rejoice in appearance*, in the Greek in the face. It goes no farther than the face, it is not within; in laughter the heart is sad. Like a house which hath a gilded frontispiece, but all the rooms within are hung in mourning. But spiritual joy lies most within, *Your heart shall rejoice.* Divine joy is like a spring of water which runs under ground; a Christian, others can see his sufferings, but they see not his joy, *Prov. xiv. 10. A stranger intermeddeth not with his joy.* This joy is hidden manna, hid from the eye of the world; he hath still music, which others hear not: the marrow lies within, the best joy is within the heart.

(3.) Spiritual joys are sweeter than others,

better than wine, *Cant. i. 2.* They are a Christian's festival; they are the golden pot and the manna, they are so sweet, that they make every thing else sweet: sweeten health, estate, as sweet water poured on flowers makes them more fragrant and aromatical. Divine joys are so delicious and ravishing, that they do very much put our mouth out of taste to earthly delights; as he who hath been drinking spirits of alkermes, tastes little sweetness in water. *St. Paul* had tasted these divine joys, and his mouth was out of taste to worldly things: the world was crucified to him, *Gal. vi. 14.* it was like a dead thing, he could find no sweetness in it.

(4.) Spiritual joys are more pure, they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients; a sinner's joy is mixed dregs, is imbittered with fear and guilt; the wolf feeds in the breasts of his joy, he drinks wormwood wine: but spiritual joy is not muddled with guilt, but like a crystal-stream, runs pure; it is all spirits and quintessence; it is joy, and nothing but joy; it is a rose without prickles, it is honey without the wax.

(5.) These are satisfying and filling joys, *John xvi. 24. Ask that your joy may be full.* Worldly joys can no more fill the heart, than a drop can fill a cistern; they may please the palate or fancy, (*Plato* calls them pictures of joy) not satisfy the soul, *Eccl. i. 8. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing*; but the joys of God satisfy, *Psf. lxiiv. 19. Thy comforts delight my soul.* There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall.

(6.) These are stronger joys than worldly, *Heb. vi. 18. Strong consolation.* They are strong indeed, that can bear up a Christian's heart in trials and afflictions, *1 Thess. i. 6. Having received the word in much affliction, with joy.* These are roses that grow in winter, these joys can sweeten the waters of *Marah*; he that hath these can gather grapes of thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcase of a lion, *2 Cor. xi. 10. As sorrowing yet always rejoicing.* At the end of the rod, a Christian tastes honey.

(7.) These are unwearied joys: other joys, when in excess, oft cause a loathing, we are apt to surfeit on them; too much honey nauseates: one may be tired with pleasure as well as labour; *Xerxes* offered a reward to him that could find out a new pleasure: but the joys of God, tho' they satisfy, yet they never surfeit; a drop of joy

joy is sweet, but the more of this wine the better; such as drink of the joys of heaven; are never cloyed; the satiety is without loathing, because they still desire the joy wherewith they are satiated.

(8.) These are more abiding joys. Worldly joys are soon gone; such as crown themselves with rose-buds, and bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure, yet these joys which seem to be sweet are swift; like meteors, they give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear: but the joys which believers have, are abiding; they are a blossom of eternity, a pledge and earnest of those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right-hand for evermore.

Qu. *Why is this joy to be laboured for?*

Ans. Because this joy is self-existent, it can subsist in the want of all other carnal joy. This joy depends not upon outward things: as the philosophers once said, when the musicians came to them, *philosophers can be merry without music*; he that hath this joy can be cheerful in the deficiency of carnal joys; he can rejoice in God, in sure hopes of glory, *though the fig-tree doth not flourish*, Hab. iii. 17. Spiritual joys can go without silver crutches to support it. Spiritual joy is higher built than upon creatures, it is built on the love of God, on the promises, on the blood of Christ.

2. Because spiritual joy carries the soul thro' duty cheerfully; the sabbath is a delight, religion is a recreation. Fear and sorrow hinder us in the discharge of duty: but a Christian serves God with activity, when he serves him with joy. The oil of joy makes the wheels of obedience move faster. How fervently did they pray, whom God made joyful in the house of prayer? *Isa. lvi. 7.*

3. Joy is the beginning of heaven here; it is called the kingdom of God, *Rom. xiv. 17.* because it is a taste of that which the saints have in the kingdom of God. What is the heaven of the angels, but the smiles of God's face, the sensible perception and feeling of those joys which are infinitely ravishing and full of glory? And, to encourage and quicken us in seeking after them, consider, that Christ died to purchase this joy for his saints: he was a man of sorrows, that we may be full of joy, *John xvii. 13.* And now I come to thee, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. And this prayer he now prays over in heaven; he knows we never love him so as when we feel his love: which may encourage us to seek after this joy;

we pray for that which Christ himself is praying for, that his joy may be fulfilled in us.

Qu. *What shall we do to obtain this spiritual joy?*

Ans. Walk accurately and heavenly; God gives it after a long and close walking with him. (1.) Observe your hours; set time every day apart for God. (2.) Mourn for sin: mourning is the seed (as *Basil* saith) out of which the flower of spiritual joy grows, *Isa. lvii. 18. I'll restore comfort to his mourners.* (3.) Keep the book of conscience fair written; do not by presumptuous sins blur your evidences: a good conscience is the ark where God puts the hidden manna. (4.) Be often upon your knees, pray with life and fervency: the same spirit that fills the heart with sighs, fills it with joys; the same spirit that indites the prayer, seals it. When *Hannah* had prayed, her countenance was no more sad, *1 Sam. i. 18.* Praying Christians have much intercourse with God; and none are so like to have the secrets of his love imparted, as those who hold correspondence with him: by a close walking with God, we get these bunches of grapes by the way, which are an earnest of future happiness.

Qu. *How shall we comfort them that want joy?*

Ans. Such as walk in close communion with God, have more than others.

1. Initial joy, joy in *semine*, in the seed, *Pf. xcvii. 11. Light* (a metaphor for joy) *is sown for the righteous. Grace in the heart is a seed of joy*; though a Christian wants the sun, he hath a day-star in his heart.

2. A believer hath real, though not royal comforts; he hath, as *Aquinas* saith, *gaudium in Deo*, though not *a Deo*; joy in God, though not from God. Joy in God, is the delight and complacency the soul takes in God, *Pf. civ. 34. My soul shall be glad in the Lord.* He that is truly gracious, is so far joyful, as to take comfort in God: though he cannot say, God rejoiceth in him, yet he can say, he rejoiceth in God.

3. He hath supporting, though not transporting comforts; he hath so much, that keeps him from sinking, *Pf. cxxxviii. 3. Thou strengthenest me with strength in my soul.* If a Christian hath not God's arm to embrace him, yet to uphold him: thus a Christian, who walks with God, hath something that bears up his heart from sinking; and it is but waiting a while, and he is sure of those joys which are unspeakable and full of glory.



*Use 1.* Then see that religion is no melancholy thing; it brings joy: the fruit of the spirit is joy; *Mutatur non tollitur*. A poor Christian, that feeds on bread and water, may have purer joy than the greatest monarch; tho' he fares hard, he feeds high; he hath a table spread from heaven, angel's food, hidden manna; he hath sometimes those sweet raptures of joy, as a cause of jubilation of spirit, 2 *Cor.* xii. 3. he hath that which is better felt than can be expressed.

*Use 2.* If God gives his people such joy in this life; Oh then what glorious joy will he give them in heaven, *Mat.* xxv. 21. *Enter thou*

*into the joy of thy Lord:* here joy begins to enter into us, there we shall enter into joy: God keeps his best wine till last. *Heliogabalus* bathed himself in sweet perfumed waters: what joy when the soul shall for ever bathe itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of God's love? What joy to see the orient brightness of Christ's face, and have the kisses of those lips which drop sweet-smelling myrrhe? *Lactabitur sponsa in amplexibus Domini*, Aug. Oh! if a clustre of grapes here be so sweet; what will the full vintage be? How may this set us all a-longing for that place, where sorrow cannot live, and where joy cannot die.



## GROWTH OF GRACE.

2 *PET.* iii. 18. *But grow in grace.*

### FRUIT IV.

**G**ROWTH of grace.] True grace is progressive, of a spreading, growing nature. It is with grace, as with the light; first, there is the *Crepusculum*, or day-break; then it shines brighter to the full meridian: A good Christian is like the crocodile, *quandiu vivit crescit*; he hath never done growing. The saints are not only compared to stars for their light, but trees for their growth, *Isa.* lxi. 3. *Hos.* xiv. 5. A good Christian is not like *Hezekiah's* sun that went backward, nor *Joshuah's* sun that stood still, but it is always advancing in holiness, and encreasing with the increase of God, *Col.* xxi. 16. Now to amplify and illustrate this.

*Qu. How many ways may a Christian be said to grow in grace?*

*Ans.* 1. He grows *vigore*, in the exercise of grace; his lamps are burning and shining: Therefore we read of a lively hope, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. Here is the activity of grace; the church prays for the blowing of the spirit, that her spices might flow forth, *Cant.* iv. 16.

2. A Christian grows *gradu*, in the degree of grace; he goes from strength to strength, *Pf.* lxxxiv. 7. *viz.* from one degree of grace; to another. A saint goes from faith to faith,

*Rom.* i. 17. and his love abounds more and more, *Phil.* i. 9. Here is growing in the degree.

*Qu. 2. What is the right manner of a Christian's growth?*

*Ans.* 1. The right manner of growth, is to grow less in one's own eyes, *Pf.* xxii. 6. *I am a worm, and no man.* The sight of corruption and ignorance makes a Christian grow into a dislike of himself, he doth vanish in his own eyes. *Job* abhorred himself in the dust, *ch.* xlii. 6. This is good to grow out of conceit with one's self.

2. The right manner of growth, is to grow proportionably, when a Christian grows in one grace as well as another, 2 *Pet.* i. 5. To grow in knowledge, but not in meekness, brotherly love, good works, this is not the right growth; a thing may swell and not grow; a man may be swelled with knowledge, yet may have no spiritual growth: the right manner of growth is uniform, growing in one grace as well as another. As the beauty of the body is when there is a symmetry of parts, not only the head grows, but the arms and breast; so spiritual growth is most beautiful when there is a symmetry and proportion, every grace thrives.

3. The

3. The right manner of growth is, when a Christian hath grace suitable to his several employments and occasions; when corruptions are strong, and he hath grace able to give check to them; burdens are heavy, and he hath patience able to bear them; temptations fierce, and he hath faith able to resist them: here is grace growing in the right manner.

Qu. 3. *Whence is it that true grace cannot but grow?*

Ans. 1. It is proper for grace to grow; 'tis *semen manens*, the seed of God, 1 John iii. 9. 'Tis the nature of seed to grow; grace doth not ly in the heart, as a stone in the earth, but as a seed in the earth, which will spring up, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

2. Grace cannot but grow, from the sweetness and excellency of it; he that hath grace, is never weary of it, but still would have more: the delight he hath in it, causeth thirst; grace is the image of God, and a Christian thinks he can never be enough like God. Grace infills peace; therefore a Christian cannot but strive to increase in grace, because, as grace grows, so peace grows.

3. Grace cannot but grow, from a believer's ingrafting into Christ; he who is a *cien*, ingrafted into this noble, generous stock, cannot but grow. Christ is so full of sap, and vivifical influence, that he makes all, inoculated into him, grow fruitful, *Hos. xiv. 8. From me is thy fruit found.*

Qu. 4. *What motives or incentives are there to make us grow in grace?*

Ans. 1. Growth is the end of the ordinances. Why doth a man lay out cost on ground, manure and water it, but that it may grow? The sincere milk of the word is, that we may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. The table of the Lord is on purpose for our spiritual nourishment and increase of grace.

2. The growth of grace is the best evidence of the truth of it: things that have no life will not grow, a picture will not grow, a stake in the hedge will not grow; but a plant that hath a vegetative life grows. The growing of grace shews it to be alive in the soul.

3. Growth in grace is the beauty of a Christian. The more a child grows, the more it comes to its favour and complexion, and looks more ruddy; so, the more a Christian grows in grace, the more he comes to his spiritual complexion, he looks fairer. *Abraham's* faith was

beautiful when in its infancy, but at last it grew so vigorous and eminent, that God himself was in love with it, and crowned *Abraham* with this honour, to be the *father of the faithful.*

4. The more we grow in grace, the more glory we bring to God: God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. This should be our design, to raise the trophies of God's glory; and how can we do it more, than by growing in grace? *John xv. 8. Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.* Tho' the least drachm of grace will bring salvation to us, yet it will not bring so much glory to God, *Phil. i. 11. Filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory.* It commends the skill of the husbandman, when his plants grow and thrive; it is a praise and honour to God, when we thrive in grace.

5. The more we grow in grace, the more will God love us. Is it not that we pray for? the more growth, the more will God love us. The husbandman loves his thriving plants; the thriving Christian is God's *Hephzibah*, or chief delight. Christ loves to see the vine flourishing, and the pomegranates budding, *Cant. vi. 11.* Christ accepts the truth of grace, but commends the growth of grace, *Matth. viii. 10. I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* Would you be as the beloved disciple that lay in Christ's bosom? would you have much love from Christ? labour for much growth, let faith flourish with good works, and love increase in to zeal.

6. What need we have to grow in grace. There is still something lacking in our faith, 1 *Theff. iii. 10.* Grace is but in its infancy and minority, and we must be still adding a cubit to our spiritual stature; the apostles said, *Lord, increase our faith,* Luke xvii. 5. Grace is but weak, 2 *Sam. iii. 39. I am this day weak, tho' anointed king.* So, tho' we are anointed with grace, yet we are but weak, and had need arrive at further degrees of sanctity.

7. The growth of grace will hinder the growth of corruption. The more health grows, the more the distempers of the body abate; so it is in spirituals; the more humility grows, the more the swelling of pride is allwaged; the more purity of heart grows, the more the fire of lust is abated. The growth of flowers in the garden doth not hinder the growing of weeds; but the growing of this flower of grace,



hinders the sprouting of corruption. As some plants have an antipathy, and will not thrive if they grow near together, as the vine and the bay-tree; so, where grace grows, sin will not thrive so fast.

8. We cannot grow too much in grace; there is no *nimum*, no excess there. The body may grow too great, as in the dropsy; but faith cannot grow too great. 2 *Theff.* i. 3. *Your faith groweth exceedingly*; here was *exceeding*, yet not *excess*. As a man cannot have too much health, so not too much grace. Grace is the beauty of holiness, *Psal.* cx. 3. We cannot have too much spiritual beauty; it will be the only trouble at death, that we have grown no more in grace.

9. Such as do not grow in grace, decay in grace: *Non progredi in via est regredi*, Bern. There is no standing at a stay in religion, either we go forward or backward: if faith doth not grow, unbelief will; if heavenly-mindedness doth not grow, covetousness will. A man that doth not increase his stock, diminisheth it; if you do not improve your stock of grace, your stock will decay. The angels on *Jacob's* ladder were either ascending or descending; if you do not ascend in religion, you descend.

10. The more we grow in grace, the more we shall flourish in glory. Tho' every vessel of glory shall be full, yet some vessels hold more: he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities, *Luke* xix. 17. Such as do not grow much, tho' they do not lose their glory, yet they lessen their glory. If any shall follow the lamb in whiter and larger robes of glory than others, they shall be such as have shined most in grace here.

*Use.* Lament we may the want of growth: religion in many is grown only into a form and profession; this is to grow in leaves, not in fruit: many Christians are like a body in an atrophy, which doth not thrive; they are not nourished by the sermons they hear; like the angels who assumed bodies, they did eat, but did not grow. It is very suspicious where there is no growth, there wants a vital principle. Some instead of growing better, grow worse; they grow more earthly, more profane, 2 *Tim.* iii. 13. Evil men *proficient in pejus*, shall wax worse and worse. Many grow hell-ward, they grow past shame, *Eph.* ii. 3. 5. they are like some watered stumps, which grow more rotten.

Qu. 5. *How shall we know whether we grow in grace?*

*Ans.* For the deciding this question, I shall, *First*, Shew the signs of our not-growing; *Secondly*, Of our growing.

*1st*, The signs of our not-growing in grace, but rather falling into a spiritual consumption.

*Sign 1.* When we have lost our spiritual appetite. A consumptive person hath not that stomach to his meat as formerly. Perhaps, Christian, thou canst remember the time when thou didst hunger and thirst after righteousness, thou didst come to the ordinances with such a stomach as to a feast; but now it is otherwise, Christ is not so prized, nor his ordinances so loved: a sad presage, grace is on the declining hand; thou art in a deep consumption. A sign *David* was near his grave, when he covered him with clothes, and he got no heat, 1 *Kings* i. 1. So, when a person is plied with hot clothes, I mean ordinances, yet he hath no heat of affection to spiritual things: this is a sign he is declining in grace.

*Sign 2.* When we grow more worldly. Perhaps once we were mounted into higher orbs, we did set our hearts on things above, and speak the language of *Canaan*; but now our minds are taken off heaven, we dig our comfort out of these lower mines, and with Satan compass the earth: a sign we are going down the hill apace, and our grace is in a consumption. It is observable, when nature decays, and people are near dying, they grow more stooping; and truly, when men's hearts grow more stooping to the earth, and they can hardly lift up themselves to an heavenly thought, if grace be not dead, yet it is ready to die, *Rev.* iii. 2.

*Sign 3.* When we are less troubled about sin. Time was when the least sin did grieve (as the least hair makes the eye weep) but now we can digest sin without remorse. Time was when a Christian was troubled if he neglected closet-prayer; now he can omit family-prayer. Time was when vain thoughts did trouble him: now he is not troubled for loose practices. Here is a sad declension in religion; and truly grace is so far from growing, that we can hardly perceive its pulse to beat.

*2dly.* The signs of our growing in grace.

1. The first sign of our growing is, *When we are got beyond our former measures of grace*: a sign a child thrives, when he hath outgrown his clothes, his clothes are too little for him.

That

That knowledge which would serve us before, will not serve us now ; we have a deeper insight into religion, our light is clearer, our spark of love is increased into a flame ; there is a sign of growth. That competency of grace we once had, is too scanty for us ; we have outgrown ourselves.

2. *When we are more firmly rooted in religion*, Col. ii. 7. *Rooted in him, and established* : the spreading of the root shews the growth of the tree. When we are so strongly fastened on Christ, that we cannot be blown down with the breath of heretics ; a blessed sign of growth. *Athanasius* was called *Adamas ecclesiæ*, an adamant that could not be removed from the love of the truth.

3. The third sign of growth ; *When we have a more spiritual frame of heart*, 1st. We are more spiritual in our principles ; we oppose sin, out of love to God, and as it strikes at his holiness. 2dly, We are more spiritual in our affections ; we grieve for the first risings of corruption, for the bubbling up of vain thoughts, the spring that runs under ground. We mourn not only for the penalty of sin, but the pollution. It is not only a coal that burns, but blacks. 3dly, We are spiritual in the performance of duty ; we are more serious, reverent, fervent ; we have more life in prayer, we put fire to the sacrifice, *Rom. xii. Fervent in spirit*. We serve God with more love, which ripens and mellows our duty, and makes it come off with a better relish.

4. The fourth sign of growth ; *When grace gets ground by opposition*. The fire, by an antiperistasis, burns hottest in the coldest season. *Peter's* courage increased by the opposition of the high priest and the rulers, *Acts iv. 8. 11*. The martyr's zeal was increased by persecution. Here was grace of the first magnitude.

Qu. 6. *What shall we do to grow in grace ?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of that which will hinder growth, the love of any sin : the body may as well thrive in a fever, as grace can where any sin is cherished.

2. Use all means for growth in grace. 1st. *Exercise yourselves to goodness*, 1 Tim. iv. 7. The body grows stronger by exercise. Trading of money makes men grow rich ; the more we trade our faith in the promises, the richer in faith we grow. 2dly, If you would be growing Christians, *be humble Christians*. 'Tis observed in some countries (as in *France*) the best and largest grapes which they make their wine of, grow on the lower sort of vines ; the humble saints grow most in grace, 1 Pet. v. 5. *God giveth grace to the humble*. 3dly, *Pray to God for spiritual growth*. Some pray that they may grow in gifts. It is better to grow in grace than gifts : gifts are for ornament, grace is for nourishment ; to edify others, to save ourselves. Some pray that they may grow rich ; but a fruitful heart is better than a full purse. Pray that God will make you grow in grace, tho' it be by affliction, *Heb. xii. 10*. The vine grows by pruning. God's pruning-knife is to make us grow more in grace.

Qu. 7. *How may we comfort such as complain they do not grow in grace ?*

Ans. They may mistake ; they may grow, when they think they do not, *Prov. xiii. 7. There is that maketh himself poor, yet he is rich*. The sight Christians have of their defects in grace, and their thirst after greater measures of grace, makes them think they do not grow when they do. He who covets a great estate, because he hath not so much as he desires, therefore he thinks himself to be poor. Indeed Christians should seek after the grace they want, but they must not therefore overlook the grace they have. Let Christians be thankful for the least growth ; if you do not grow so much in assurance, bless God if you grow in sincerity ; if you do not grow so much in knowledge, bless God if you grow in humility. If a tree grows in the root, it is a true growth ; if you grow in the root-grace of humility, it is as needful for you as any other growth.



## OF PERSEVERANCE.

1 *PET. i. 5. Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.*

THE fifth and last fruit of sanctification, is perseverance in grace. The heavenly inheritance is kept for the saints, *1 Pet. i. 4.* and they are kept to the inheritance; in my text, *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* The apostle asserts a saint's stability and permanency in grace. The saints perseverance is much oppugned by *Papists* and *Arminians*; but it is not the less true, because it is opposed. A Christian's main comfort depends upon this doctrine of perseverance: take away this, and you much prejudice religion, and cut the sinews of all chearful endeavours. Before I come to the full handling and discussing this great point, let me first clear the sense of it, which I first shall do by way of concession or grant.

When I say, believers do persevere: *1st*, I grant, that such as are so only in profession, may fall away, *2 Tim. iv. 10. Demas hath forsaken us.* Blazing comets soon evaporate. A building on sand will fall, *Matth. vii. 26. Seeming grace may be lost.* No wonder to see a bough fall from a tree that is only tied on. Hypocrites are only tyed on to Christ by an external profession, they are not ingrafted. Who ever thought artificial motion would hold long? the hypocrites motion is only artificial, not vital. All blossoms do not ripen into fruit.

*2ly*, I grant, that, if believers were left to stand upon their own legs, they might fall finally. Some of the angels, who were stars full of light and glory, yet did actually lose their grace; and if those pure angels fell from grace, much more would the godly, who have so much sin to betray them, if they were not upheld by a superior power.

*3ly*, I grant, true believers, tho' they do not fall away actually, and lose all their grace, yet their grace may fail in the degree, and they may make a great breach upon their sanctification. *Grace may be moritura, non mortua; dying, but not dead, Rev. iii. 2. Strengthen the things which are ready to die.* Grace may be like fire in the embers, tho' not quenched, yet the flame

is gone out. This decay of grace I shall shew in two particulars; (1.) The lively affings of grace may be suspended, *Rev. ii. 4. Thou hast left thy first love.* Grace may be like a sleepy habit; the godly may act faintly in religion, the pulse of their affections may beat low. The wise virgins slumbered, *Matth. xxv. 5.* The exercise of grace may be hindered; as when the course of water is stopt, and doth not run. (2.) Instead of grace exercising in the godly, corruption may exercise; instead of patience, murmuring; instead of heavenliness, earthliness. How did pride put forth itself in the disciples, when they strove who should be the greatest! how did lust put forth itself in *David*? Thus lively and vigorous may *corruption* be in the regenerate; they may fall into enormous sins. But tho' all this be granted, yet they do not, *penitus excidere*, fall away finally from grace. *David* did not quite lose his grace; for then, why did he pray, *Take not away thy holy spirit from me?* He had not quite lost the spirit. As *Eutyches*, when he fell from a window, *Acts xx.* and all thought he was dead; *No, saith Paul, there is life in him:* so *David* fell foully, but there was the life of grace in him. Tho' the saints may come to that pass, they have but little faith, yet not to have no faith: though their grace may be drawn low, yet not drawn dry: though grace may be abated, not abolished; though the wise virgins slumbered, yet their lamps were not quite gone out. Grace, when it is at the lowest, shall revive and flourish; as when *Samson* had lost his strength, his hair grew again, and he renewed his strength. Having thus explained the proposition, I come now to the amplifying this great doctrine of the saints perseverance.

Qu. 1. *By what means do Christians come to persevere?*

Ans. 1. By the manuduction and help of ordinances, prayer, word, sacraments. Christians do not arrive at perseverance when they sit still and do nothing. It is not with us as with

with passengers in a ship, who are carried to the end of their voyage, and they sit still in the ship; or as it is with noblemen, who have their rents brought in without their toil or labour: but we arrive at salvation in the use of means; as a man comes to the end of a race by running, to a victory, by fighting, *Mat. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray. As Paul said, Acts xxvii. 31. Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved*: believers shall come to shore at last, arrive at heaven; but, *except they abide in the ship*, viz. in the use of ordinances, *they cannot be saved*. The ordinances cherish grace; as they beget grace, so they are the breast-milk by which it is nourished and preserved to eternity.

2. *Auxilio spiritus*, by the sacred influence and concurrence of the spirit. The spirit of God is continually at work in the heart of a believer, to carry on grace to perseverance; it drops on fresh oil, to keep the lamp of grace burning. The spirit excites, strengthens, increaseth grace, and makes a Christian go from one step of faith to another, till he comes to the end of his faith, *salvation. 1 Pet. i. 9. It is a fine expression of the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 14. The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us*. He who dwells in an house, keeps the house in repair; the spirit dwelling in a believer, keeps grace in repair. Grace is compared to a river of the water of life, *John vii. 38. This river can never be dried up, because God's spirit is a spring which continually feeds it*.

3. Grace is carried on to perseverance, by Christ's daily intercession. As the spirit is at work in the heart, so is Christ at work in heaven. Christ is ever praying that the saints grace may hold out, *John xvii. 11. Conserva illos; Father, keep those whom thou hast given me; keep them as stars in their orb; keep them as jewels, that they might not be lost. Father, keep them, That prayer Christ made for Peter, was the copy of his prayer he now makes for believers, Luke xxii. 23. I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, that it be not totally eclipsed: how can the children of such prayers perish?*

Qu. 2. *By what arguments may we prove the saints perseverance?*

Ans. 2. *A veritate Dei*, from the truth of God. God hath both asserted it, and promised it. (1.) God hath asserted it, *1 John ii. 9. His seed remaineth in him. 1 John iii. 27. The anointing ye have received of him abideth in you.* (2.) As God hath asserted it, so he hath promised it:

the truth of God, the most orient pearl of his crown, is laid a pawn in the promise, *John x. 28. I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Jer. xxxii. 42. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me*. God will so love his people, that he will not forsake them; and they shall so fear him, that they shall not forsake him. If a believer should not persevere, God should break his promise, *Hos. ii. 19. I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in righteousness and loving-kindness*. God doth not marry his people unto himself and then divorce them; he hates putting away, *Mal. ii. 16. God's love ties the marriage-knot so fast, that neither death nor hell can break it asunder*.

2. The second argument is, *a potentia Dei*, from the power of God. In the text, we are kept by the power of God unto salvation: every person in the trinity hath an hand in making a believer persevere. God the father establisheth, *1 Cor. i. 21. God the son confirms, 1 Cor. i. 8. God the Holy Ghost seals, Eph. i. 13. so that it is the power of God that keeps us*. Alas, we are not kept by our own power. The Pelagians held, that man, by his own power, might overcome temptation, and persevere. But St. Austin confutes him. Man, saith he, prays unto God for perseverance, which would be absurd, if he had power of himself to persevere. And, saith St. Austin, if all the power be inherent in a man's self, then why should not one persevere, as well as another? Why not Judas as well as Peter? So that it is not by any other than the power of God that we are kept: as the Lord preserved Israel from perishing in the wilderness, till he brought them to Canaan: the same care will he take, if not in a miraculous manner, yet in a spiritual invisible manner in preserving his people in a state of grace, till he bring them to the celestial Canaan. As the heathens feigned of Atlas, that he did bear up the heavens from falling; the power of God is that Atlas which bears up the saints from falling. It is disputed whether grace of itself may not perish, as Adam's; yet sure I am, grace kept by the power of God cannot perish.

3. The third argument is taken: *ab electione*, from God's electing love. Such as God hath from all eternity elected to glory, cannot fall away finally; but every true believer is elected to glory, therefore he cannot fall away. What



can frustrate election, or make God's decree void? This argument stands like mount *Sion*, which cannot be moved; insomuch that some of the papists hold, that such who have absolute election cannot fall away, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. *The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his.* The foundation of God is nothing else but God's decree in election; and this stands sure, God will not alter it, others cannot.

4. The fourth argument is taken, *ab unione cum Christo*, from believers union with Christ. They are knit to Christ as the members to the head by the nerves and ligament of faith, so that they cannot be broken off, *Eph.* v. 23. What was once said of Christ's natural body, is true of his mystical, *A bone of it shall not be broken.* As it is not possible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, ever to be separated: Christ and his members make one Christ. Now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ lose any member of his body mystical, and be perfect? In short, *Si unus excidat, quare non & alter?* If one believer may be broken off from Christ; then, by the same rule, *why not another? Why not all?* And so Christ should be an head without a body.

5. The fifth argument is taken *ab emptione*, from the nature of a purchase. A man will not lay down his money for a purchase which may be lost, and the fee-simple alienated. Christ died, that he might purchase us a people to himself for ever, *Heb.* ix. 12. *Having obtained eternal redemption for us.* Would Christ, think we, have shed his blood, that we might believe in him for a while, and then fall away? Do we think Christ will lose his purchase?

6. The sixth argument is, *a victoria supra mundum*, from a believer's victory over the world. The argument stands thus; he who overcomes the world, doth persevere in grace; but a believer doth overcome the world, *therefore* he perseveres in grace, 1 *John* v. 4. *This is the victory over the world, even our faith.* A man may lose a single battle in the field, yet at last win the victory: a child of God may be foiled in a single battle against temptation (as *Peter* was) but at last he is victorious. Now, if a saint be crowned victor, if the world be conquered by him, he must needs persevere.

I come next to answer some objections of the *Arminians*.

1<sup>st</sup>. The first objection of the *Arminians*, is, *if a believer shall persevere in grace, then, to what purpose are all those admonitions in scripture?* Let him take heed lest he fall, 1 *Cor.* x. 12. And, *Heb.* iv. 11. Let us fear, lest any of you seem to come short. *These admonitions seem to be superfluous and vain, if a saint shall certainly persevere.*

*Ans.* No, these counsels and admonitions are necessary to caution believers against carelessness; they are as goads and spurs to quicken them to a greater diligence in working out salvation. These admonitions do not imply the saints can fall away, but they are preservatives to keep them from falling away. Christ told some of his disciples, they should abide in him, yet he exhorts them to abide in him, *John* xv. His exhorting them was not in the least to question their abiding in him, but to awaken their diligence, and make them pray the harder, that they might abide in him.

2<sup>dly</sup>. The second objection is, *Heb.* vi. 4. *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have felt the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*

*Ans.* This place of scripture hath no force in it; for the apostle here speaks of hypocrites, to shew how far they may go, yet fall away. 1. *They who were once enlightened:* Men may have great illuminations, yet fall away. Was not *Judas* enlightened! 2. *They have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost;* the common gifts of the spirit, not the special grace. 3. *They have tasted the good word of God.* Tasting here is opposed to eating; the hypocrite may have a kind of taste of the sweetness of religion, but this taste doth not nourish. There is a great deal of difference between one that takes a gargle, and a cordial; the gargle only washeth his mouth, he tastes it, and puts it out again; but a cordial is drunk down, which nourisheth and cherisheth the spirits. The hypocrite, who hath only some smack or taste of religion (as one tastes a gargle) may fall away. 4. *And have felt the powers of the world to come:* that is, they may have such apprehensions of the glory of heaven, as to be affected with it, and seem to have some joy in the thoughts of it, yet fall away; as in the parable of the stony ground, *Mat.*

*Mat. xiii. 20.* All this is spoken of the hypocrite; but it doth not therefore prove, that the true believer, who is effectually wrought upon, can fall away. Though comets fall, it doth not

therefore follow, that true stars fall. That this scripture speaks not of sound believers, is clear from *v. 9.* *But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.*

## OF PERSEVERANCE.

1. *PET. i. 5.* *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*

*Use 1.* **S**EE the excellency of grace, it perseveres: other things are but for a season: health and riches are sweet, but they are but for a season: but grace is a blossom of eternity. The seed of God remains, *1 John iii. 9.* Grace may suffer an eclipse, not a dissolution. It is called *substance*, for its solidity, *Prov. viii. 21.* and *durable riches*, for its permanency, *Prov. viii. 18.* It lasts as long as the soul, as heaven lasts. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires, but it runs parallel with eternity.

2. See here that which may excite in the saints everlasting love and gratitude to God. What can make us love God more than the fixedness of his love to us? He is not only the author of grace, but finisher; his love is perpetuated and carried on to our salvation, *John x. 27.* *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life.* My sheep, there is election; *hear my voice*, there is vocation; *and I know them*, there is justification; *and I give unto them eternal life*, there is glorification. How may this make us love God, and set up the monuments and trophies of his praise! how much have we done to cause God to withdraw his spirit, and suffer us to fall finally! yet that he should keep us, let his name be blessed, and his memorials eternized, who keepeth the feet of his saints, *1 Sam. ii. 9.*

3. See whence it is that the saints do persevere in holiness: it is solely to be ascribed to the power of God; we are kept by his power, kept as in a garrison: it is a wonder any Christian perseveres, if you consider, (1.) *Corruption within.* The tares are mingled with the wheat; there is more sin than grace, yet grace is habitually predominant. Grace is like a spark in the sea, a wonder it is not quenched: a wonder sin doth not destroy grace; that it doth not do, as sometimes the nurse to the infant, overlay it, and it dies;

so that this infant of grace is not smothered by corruption. (2.) *Temptations without.* Satan envies us happiness, and he raiseth his militia, stirs up persecution; he shoots his fiery darts of temptation; they are called darts for their swiftness, fiery for their terribleness. We are every day beset with devils: as it was a wonder *Daniel* was kept alive in the midst of the roaring lions; so, that there are so many roaring devils about us, and yet we are not torn in pieces. Now, whence is it we stand against these powerful temptations? We are kept by the power of God. (3.) *The world's golden snares, riches and pleasure*, *Luke xviii. 24.* *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?* How many have been cast away upon these golden sands, *2 Tim. iv. 10.* as *Demas*? What a wonder any soul perseveres in religion, that the earth doth not choke the fire of good affections? Whence is this but from the power of God? We are kept by his power.

*Use 2. Consolation.* This doctrine of perseverance is as *Bezár stone*: it is a sovereign cordial to keep up the spirits of the godly from fainting. There is nothing doth more trouble a child of God than this, he fears he shall never hold out; these weak legs of mine will never carry me to heaven. But perseverance is an inseparable fruit of sanctification; *Once in Christ, and for ever in Christ.* A believer may fall from some degrees of grace, but not from the state of grace: an *Israelite* could never wholly sell or alienate his land of inheritance, *Lev. xxv. 23.* A type of our heavenly inheritance, which cannot be wholly alienated from us. How despairing is the *Arminian* doctrine of falling from grace? To day a saint, to morrow a reprobate; to day a *Peter*, to morrow a *Judas*. This must needs cut the sinews of a Christian's endeavour, and be as the boring an hole in the vessel, to make all the wine of his



his joy run out. Were the *Arminian* doctrine true, how could the apostle say, the seed of God remains in him; 1 *John* iii. 9. and the anointing of God abides? 1 *John* ii. 27. What comfort were it to have one's name written in the book of life, if it might be blotted out again? but be assured for your comfort, grace, if true, though never so weak, shall persevere: though a Christian hath but little grace to trade with, yet he need not fear breaking, because God doth not only give him a stock of grace, but will keep his stock for him. *Gratia concutitur, non excutitur*, (Aug.) Grace may be shaken with fears and doubts, but it cannot be plucked up by the roots. *Fear not falling away*. If any thing should hinder the saint's perseverance, then it must be either sin or temptation; but neither of these: 1. Not the sins of believers. That which humbles them shall not damn them: but their sins are a means to humble them; they gather grapes of thorns; from the thorn of sin, they gather the grape of humility. 2. Not temptation; the devil lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of a saint's grace, but this cannot do it. Temptation is a medicine for security; the more *Satan* tempts, the more the saints pray. When *Paul* had the messenger of *Satan* to buffet him, 2 *Cor.* xii. 8. *For this besought I the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me*. Thus nothing can break off a believer from Christ, or hinder his perseverance, Let this wine be given to such as are of an heavy heart: this perseverance is comfort, 1. *In the loss of worldly comforts*. When our goods may be taken away, our grace cannot, *Luke* x. 42. *Mary hath chosen the better part, which cannot be taken from her*. 2. *In the hour of death*. When all things fail, friends take their farewell of us; yet still grace remains. Death may separate all things else from us but grace: a Christian may say on his death bed, as *Olevian* once, *Sight is gone, speech and hearing are departing, but the loving-kindness of God will never depart*.

Qu. 1. What motives and incentives are there to make Christians persevere?

Ans. 2. It is the crown and glory of a Christian to persevere, *In Christianis non initia sed fines laudantur*. *Prov.* xvi. 31. *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if found in the way of righteousness*. When gray hairs shine with golden virtues, this is a crown of glory. The church of *Thyatira* was best at last. *Rev.* ii. 19. *I know thy patience and thy works, and the last to be more than the first*. The excellency of a build-

ing is not in having the first stone laid, but when it is finished. The glory and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished the work of faith.

2. You are within a few days march of heaven. Salvation is near to you, *Rom.* xiii. 11. *Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*. Christians, it is but a while and you shall have done weeping and praying, and be triumphing; you shall put off your mourning, and put on white robes; you shall put off your armour, and put on a victorious crown: you who have made a good progress in religion, you are almost ready to commence and take your degree of glory; now is your salvation nearer than when you began to believe. When a man is almost at the end of a race, will he now tire, or faint away? O labour to persevere, your salvation is now nearer; you have but a little way to go, and you will set your feet in heaven. Though the way be uphill and full of thorns, *viz.* sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, and shortly you shall rest from your labours.

3. How sad is it not to persevere in holiness? You expose yourselves to the reproaches of men, and the rebukes of God. *First*, to the reproaches of men. They will deride both you and your profession. *Luke* xiv. 28. *This man began to build, and was not able to finish*. Such is he who begins in religion, and doth not persevere: he is the *ludibrium*, and derision of all. *Secondly*, To the rebukes of God. God is most severe against such as fall off; because they bring an evil report upon religion. Apostacy breeds a bitter worm in conscience; what a worm did *Spira* feel! and it brings swift damnation; it is a drawing back to perdition, *Heb.* x. 48. God will make his sword drunk with the blood of apostates.

4. The promises of mercy are annexed only to perseverance, *Rev.* iii. 5. *He that overcometh, shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life*. 'Non pugnanti, sed vincenti dabitur corona,' *Aug.* The promise is not to him that fights, but that overcomes, *Luke* xxii. 28. *Ye are they which have continued with me, and I appoint unto you a kingdom*. The promise of a kingdom, saith *Chrysostom*, is not made to them that heard Christ, or followed him, but that continued with him. Perseverance carries away the garland; no man hath the crown set upon his head, but he who holds out to the end of the race.

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O therefore, by all this, be persuaded to persevere; God makes no account of such as do not persevere. Who esteems of corn that sheds before harvest, or fruit that falls from the tree before it be ripe?

Qu. 2. *What expedients or means may be used for a Christian's perseverance?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of those things which will make you desist and fall away. 1st, Take heed of presumption. Do not presume upon your own strength; exercise an holy fear and jealousy over your own hearts, *Rom. xi. 20. Be not high-minded, but fear. 1 Cor. x. 12. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* It was Peter's sin, he leaned more upon his grace than upon Christ, and then he fell. A Christian hath cause to fear lest the lusts and deceit of his heart betray him: take heed of presuming; fear begets prayer, prayer begets strength, and strength begets steadfastness. (2dly,) Take heed of hypocrisy. Judas was first a sly hypocrite, and then a traitor, *Psal. lxxviii. 37. Their heart was not right with God, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.* If there be any venom or malignity in the blood, it will break forth into a plague-sore. The venom of hypocrisy is in danger of breaking out into the plague-sore of scandal. (3dly,) Beware of a vile heart of unbelief, *Heb. iii. 12. Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Whence is apostasy but from incredulity? men do not believe the truth, and then they fall from the truth. Unbelieving and unstable go together, *Psal. lxxviii. 22. They believed not in God. V. 41. They turned back.*

2. If you would be pillars in the temple of God, and persevere in sanctity,

First, Look that you enter into religion upon a right ground; be well-grounded in the distinct knowledge of God: you must know the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost. Such as know not God aright, will by degrees fall off. The Samaritans sometimes sided with the Jews when they were in favour, afterwards disclaimed all kindred with them, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews: and no wonder the Samaritans were no more fixed in religion, if you consider what Christ saith of the Samaritans, *John iv. 22. Ye worship ye know not what: they were ignorant of the true God.* Let your knowledge of God be clear, and serve him purely out of choice, and then you will persevere, *Psal. cxix. 30. I*

*have chosen the way of truth, I have stuck unto thy testimonies.*

Secondly, Get a real work of grace in your heart, *Heb. xiii. 9. It is a good thing that the heart is established with grace.* Nothing will hold out but grace; 'tis only this anointing abides; paint will fall off. Get an heart-changing work, *1 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.* Be not content with baptism of water, without baptism of the spirit: the reason men persevere not in religion, is for want of a vital principle. A branch must needs wither, that hath no root to grow upon.

Thirdly, If you would persevere, be very sincere. Perseverance grows only upon the root of sincerity, *Psal. xxv. 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.* The breast-plate of sincerity can never be shot through. How many storms was Job in? the devils set against him, his wife tempted him to curse God, his friends accused him of being a hypocrite; here was enough, one would think, to have made him to desist from religion: yet for all this, he perseveres. What preserved him? it was his sincerity, *Job xxvii. 6. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

Fourthly, If you would persevere, be humble. St. Chrysostom calls it the mother of all the graces. God lets a poor, humble Christian stand, when others of higher parts, and who have higher thoughts of themselves, fall off by apostasy. They are likeliest to persevere, whom God will give most grace to: *But he gives grace to the humble, 1 Pet. v. 5.* They are likeliest to persevere, who have God dwelling in them: *But God dwells in the humble soul, Isa. lvii. 15. Non requiescit Spiritus sanctus nisi super humilem, Bern.* The lower the tree roots in the earth, the firmer it is; the more the soul is rooted in humility, the more established it is, and is in less danger of falling away.

Fifthly, If perseverance cherish the grace of faith. Faith doth *stabilire animum*, *2 Cor. i. 24. By faith ye stand.* 1. Faith knits us to Christ, as the members are knit to the head by nerves and sinews. 2. Faith fills us with love to God; *It works by love, Gal. v. 6.* And he who loves God, will rather die than desert him: the soldier who loves his general, will die in his service. 3. Faith gives us a prospect of heaven, it shews us an invisible glory; and he who hath Christ in his heart, and a crown in his eye, will not faint away. O cherish faith;

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keep your faith, and your faith will keep you : while the pilot keeps his ship, his ship keeps him.

*Sixthly*, If persevere, let us engage the power of God to help us ; we are kept by the power of God. The child is safest when it is held in the nurse's arms ; so are we, when we are held in the arms of free grace. It is not our holding God, but his holding us, preserves us. When a boat is tied to a rock, it is secure : so, when we are fast tied to the rock of ages, then we are impregnable. O engage God's power to help us to persevere. We engage his power by prayer : let us pray to him to keep us, *Psal.* xvii. 5: *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.* It was a good prayer of Beza, *Domine, quod cepisti perfice, ne in portu naufragium accadat ;* Lord, perfect what thou

hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.

*Seventhly*, If persevere, set often before your eyes the noble examples of those who have persevered in religion ; *Quot martyres, quot fideles in coelis, jam triumphant ?* What a glorious army of saints and martyrs have gone before us ? how constant to the death was St. Paul ? *Acts* xxi. 13. How persevering in the faith were *Ignatius, Polycarp, Athanasius ?* These were stars in their orb, pillars in the temple of God. Let us look on their zeal and courage, and be animated, *Heb.* i. 12. *Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* The crown is set at the end of the race ; if we win the race, we shall wear the crown.



## A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

*PHIL.* i. 21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

**S**AINTE Paul was a great admirer of Christ, he desired to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, *1 Cor.* ii. 2. NoJulip to the blood of Christ ; and in the text, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

First, *To me to live is Christ.* We must understand Paul of a spiritual life. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is my life ; so *Greg. Nyssen.* Or thus, my life is made up of Christ : as a wicked man's life is made of sin ; so Paul's life was made of Christ, he was full of Christ. But, that I may give you the sense of the text more fully, take it in these three particulars ;

1. Christ is the principle of my life.
2. Christ is the end of my life.
3. Christ is the joy of my life.

1. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is the principle of my life. I fetch my spiritual life from Christ, as the branch fetcheth its sap from the root, *Gal.* ii. 20. *Christ liveth in me.* Jesus Christ is an head of influence ; he sends forth life and spirits into me, to quicken me to every holy action. Thus, *To me to live is Christ* ; Christ is the principle of my life : from his fulness I live, as the vine-branch lives from the root.

2. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is the end of my life ; I live not to myself but to Christ. So *Grotius* and *Casaubon*, *Christo servo*, *To me to live is Christ* ; all my living is to do service to Christ, *Rom.* xiv. 8. *Whether we live, we*

*live unto the Lord.* When we lay out ourselves wholly for Christ ; as the factor trades for the merchant, so we trade for Christ's interest, we propagate his gospel ; the design of our life is to exalt Christ, and make the crown upon his head flourish. Now it may be said, *To us to live is Christ*, our whole life is a living to Christ.

3. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is the joy of my life, *Psal.* xlii. 4. *God my exceeding joy, or the cream of my joy.* A Christian rejoiceth in Christ's righteousness ; he can rejoice in Christ, when worldly joys are gone : when the tulip in a garden withers, a man rejoiceth in his jewels ; when relations die, a saint can rejoice in Christ the pearl of price. In this sense, *To me to live is Christ*, he is the joy of my life ; if Christ were gone, my life would be a death to me.

*Use.* It should exhort us all to labour to say as the apostle, *To me to live is Christ.* Christ is the principle of my life, the end of my life, the joy of my life, *To me to live is Christ* ; and then we may comfortably conclude, that *to die* shall be gain.

*Secondly*, And that brings me to the second part of the text, *And to die is gain.*

*Doct.* To a believer death is great gain. A saint can tell what his losses for Christ are, but he

he cannot tell how great his gains are at death : *To me to die is gain.* Death to a believer, is *crepusculum gloriæ*, the day-break of eternal brightness. To shew fully what a believer's gains are at death, were a task too great for an angel ; all hyperboles fall short, the reward of glory exceeds our very faith : only let me give you some dark views and imperfect lineaments of that infinite glory the saints shall gain at the hour of death ; *To me to die is gain.*

1. Believers at death shall gain a writ of ease from all sins and troubles ; they shall be in a state of impeccability : sin expires with their life. I think sometimes what an happy state that will be, never to have a sinful thought more : and they shall have a *quietus est* from their troubles. Here *David* cried out, *My life is spent with griefs, and my years with sighing,* Psal. xxxi. 10. *Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri,* Aug. Life begins with a cry, and ends with a groan ; but at death all troubles die.

2. Believers at death shall gain the glorious sight of God. They shall see him ; *First*, Intellectually with the eyes of their mind, which Divines call the beatifical vision : if there were not such an intellectual sight of God, how do the *spirits of just men see him* ? *Secondly*, They shall behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ ; and if it be pleasant to behold the sun, then how blessed a sight will it be to see Christ the sun of righteousness clothed with our human nature, shining in glory above the angels ? Through Christ's flesh, as through a transparent glass, some bright rays and beams of the godhead shall display themselves to glorified eyes : the sight of God through Christ will be very complacential and delightful ; the terror of God's essence will be taken away : God's majesty will be mixed with beauty, and sweetened with clemency ; it will be infinitely delightful to the saints to see the amiable aspects and smiles of God's face. Which brings me to the third thing.

3. The saints at death shall not only have a sight of God, but shall enjoy the love of God ; there shall be no more vail on God's face, nor his smiles chequered with frowns, but God's love shall discover itself in all its orient beauty and fragrant sweetness. Here the saints pray for God's love, and they have a few drops ; but there they shall have as much as their vessel can receive. To know this love that passeth knowledge, this will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the

saints, as are superlative, and would soon overwhelm them, if God did not make them able to bear.

4. Believers at death shall gain a celestial palace, an house not made with hands, 1 Cor. v. 1. Here the saints are straitened for room, they have but mean cottages to live in ; but they shall have a royal palace to live in : here is but their sojourning house, there in heaven is their mansion-house, an house built high above all the visible orbs, an house bespangled with light, Col. i. 12. enriched with pearls and precious stones, Rev. xxi. 19. And this is not their landlord's house, but their father's house, John xiv. 2. and this house stands all upon consecrated ground ; it is set out by transparent glass, to shew the holiness of it, Rev. xxi. 27.

5. Believers at death shall gain the sweet society of glorified saints and angels : this will add something to the felicity of heaven, as every star adds some lustre to the firmament. *First*, The society of the glorified saints ; we shall see them in their souls, as well as in their bodies : their bodies shall be so clear and bright, that we shall see their souls shining through their bodies, as the wine through the glass ; and believers at death shall have converse with the saints glorified. And how delightful will that be, when they shall be freed from all their sinful corruptions, pride, envy, passion, censoriousness, which are scars upon them here to disfigure them ? in heaven there shall be perfect love among the saints ; they shall, as the olive and myrtle, sweetly embrace each other : the saints shall know one another (as *Luther* speaks). If in the transfiguration, *Peter* knew *Moses* and *Elias*, which he never saw before, *Matth.* xvii. 3. then much more, in the glorified state, the saints shall perfectly know one another, tho' they never saw them before. *Secondly*, The saints at death shall behold the angels with the glorified eye of their understanding. The wings of the cherubims (representing the angels) were made of fine gold, to denote both their sanctity and splendor : the angels are compared to lightning, *Matth.* xxviii. 3. because of those sparkling beams of majesty which as lightning shoot from them. And when saints and angels shall meet and sing together in consort in the heavenly quire, what divine harmony, what joyful triumphs will it create ?

6. Believers at death shall gain perfection of holiness. Here grace was but in *cunabulis*, in



its cradle, very imperfect; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting; believers are said to receive but *primitias Spiritus*, the first-fruits of the Spirit, *Rom. viii. 23*. But at death the saints shall arrive at perfection, their knowledge clear, their sanctity perfect; their sun shall be in its full meridian splendor. They need not then pray for *increase of grace*; they shall love God as much as they would love him, and as much as he desires to have them love him: they shall be then, in respect of holiness, as the angels of God.

7. At death, the saints shall gain a royal magnificent feast. I told you before what a glorious palace they shall have; but a man may starve in a house, if there be no cheer. The saints at death shall have a royal banquet, shadowed out in scripture by a marriage-supper, *Rev. xix. 9*. *Bullinger* and *Gregory* the great understand, by that marriage-supper of the lamb, the stately, magnificent festival the saints shall have in heaven; they shall feed on the tree of life, *Rev. xxii*. They shall have the heavenly nectar and ambrosia, *the spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate*, *Cant. viii. 2*. This royal supper of the lamb will not only satisfy hunger, but prevent it, *Rev. vii. 16*. *They shall hunger no more*. Nor can there be any surfeit at this feast, because a fresh course will be continually serving in: new and fresh delights will spring from God; therefore the tree of life in paradise is said to bear twelve sorts of fruit, *Rev. xxii. 2*.

8. Believers at death shall gain honour and dignity, they shall reign as kings; therefore we read of the ensigns of their royalty, their white robes and crowns celestial, *1 Tim. iv. 7*. We read that the doors of the holy of holies were made of palm-trees and open flowers, covered with gold, *1 Kings vi. 35*. An emblem of that victory and triumph, and that golden garland of honour wherewith God hath invested the saints glorified. When all worldly honour shall lie in the dust, the mace, the star, the robe of ermine, the imperial diadem, then shall the saints honour remain; not one jewel shall be plucked out of their crown; they shall gain at death a blessed eternity. If the saints could have the least suspicion or fear of losing their glory, it would much cool and embitter their joy; but their crown fades not away, *1 Pet. v. 4*. As the wicked have a worm that never dies, so the elect have a crown that never fades. *Ever*, is a short word, but hath no

ending; *In fine erit gaudium sine fine*, *Bern. 2 Cor. iv. 18*. *The things which are not seen are eternal*. *Psal. xvi. 11*. *At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore*. Who can span eternity? millions of ages stand but for cyphers in eternity. This is the *clash*, or highest strain of the saint's glory; ever in Christ's bosom.

Qu. *How come the saints to have all this gain?*

Ans. Believers have a right to all this gain at death, upon a divers account: by virtue of the Father's donation, the Son's purchase, the Holy Ghost's earnest, and faith's acceptance. Therefore the state of future glory is called the saints proper inheritance, *Col. i. 12*. They are heirs of God, and have a right to inherit.

Use 1. See the great difference between the death of the godly and the wicked; the godly are gainers at death, the wicked are great losers at death. They lose four things;

(1.) They lose the world; and that is a great loss to the wicked: they laid up their treasure upon earth; and to be turned out of all at once, is a great loss.

(2.) They lose their souls, *Matth. xvi. 26*. The soul was at first a noble piece of coin, which God stamped his own image upon: this celestial spark is more precious than the whole globe of the world; but the sinner's soul is lost; not that the souls of the wicked are annihilated at death, but damned.

(3.) They lose heaven. Heaven is *sedes beatorum*, the royal seat of the blessed; it is the region of happiness, the map of perfection. There is that manna which is angel's food; there is the garden of spices, the bed of perfumes, the river of pleasure. Sinners, at death, lose all this.

(4.) They lose their hopes; for tho' they lived wickedly, yet they hoped God was merciful, and they hoped they should go to heaven. Their hope was not an anchor, but a spider's web. Now, at death, they lose their hopes, they see they did but flatter themselves into hell, *Job. viii. 14*. *Whose hope shall be cut off*. That is sad, to have a man's life and his hope cut off together.

Use 2. If the saints gain such glorious things at death; then how may they desire death? doth not every one desire preferment? *Nemo ante funera felix*----- Faith gives a title to heaven, death a possession. Tho' we should be desirous of doing service here, yet we should be ambitious of being with Christ, *Phil. i. 23*.

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We should be content to live, but willing to die. Is it not a blessed thing to be freed from sin, and to ly for ever in the bosom of divine love? is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven, and to be singing divine anthems of praise among the angels? doth not the bride desire the marriage-day, especially if she were to be matched unto the crown? what is our place we now live in, but a place of banishment from God? we are in a wilderness, while the angels live at court. Here we are combating with Satan, and should not we desire to be out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and to receive a victorious crown? think what it will be to have always a smiling aspect from Christ's face; to be brought into the banqueting-house, and have the banner of his love displayed over you. O ye saints, desire death, it is your ascension-day to heaven. *Egredere, anima, egredere*, said *Hilarion* on his death-bed; *Go forth, my soul, what fearest thou?* Another holy man said, *Lord, lead me to that glory which I have seen as through a glass; haste, Lord, and do not tarry.* Some plants thrive

best when they are transplanted: believers, when they are by death transplanted, cannot choose but thrive, because they have Christ's sweet sun-beams shining upon them: and what tho' the passage through the valley of the shadow of death be troublesome? who would not be willing to pass a tempestuous sea, if he were sure to be crowned so soon as he came to shore.

*Use 3.* Comfort in the loss of our dear and pious relations. They, when they die, are not only taken away from the evil to come, but they are great gainers by death; they leave a wilderness, and go to a paradise; they change their complaints into thanksgivings; they leave their sorrows behind, and enter into the joy of their Lord: why should we weep for their preferment? believers have not their portion paid till the day of their death: God's promise is his bond to make over heaven in reversion to them; but tho' they have his bond, they do not receive their portion till the day of death. Oh! rejoyce to think of their happiness who die in the Lord; to them *to die is gain*: they are as rich as heaven can make them.

## A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. i. 21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

**H**OPE is a Christian's anchor, which he casts within the vail, *Rom. xii. 12. Rejoycing in hope.* A Christian's hope is not in this life, but he *bath hope in his death*, *Prov. xiv. 32.* The best of a saint's comfort begins when his life ends: the wicked have all their heaven here, *Luke vi. 23. Wo unto you, Rich, you have received your consolation.* You may make your acquittance, and write, *Received in full payment*; *Luke xvi. 25. Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivest thy good things.* But a saint's happiness is in reversion; *The Righteous bath hope in his death.* God keeps the best wine till last. If *Cato* the heathen said, *To me to die is gain: he saw mortality to be a mercy*: then, what may a believer say? *Eccl. vii. 1. The day of death is better than the day of one's birth.* *Nemo ante funera felix*, *Solon.* A queen of this land

said, she preferred her coffin before her cradle.

*Qu. 1. What benefits do believers receive at death?*

*Ans. 1.* They have great immunities. 2. They pass immediately into a state of glory. 3. Their bodies are united to Christ in the grave till the resurrection.

1. The saints, at death, have great immunities and freedoms. A prentice, when out of his time, is made free: when the saints are out of their time of living, then they are made free; not made free till death. 1. At death they are freed from a body of sin. There are in the best *reliquiae peccati*; some remainders and reliques of corruption, *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!* By the body of death is meant the congeries, the mass and lump of sin. It may well be called a body for its weightiness, and



and a body of death for its noisomeness. (1.) It weighs us down; sin hinders us from doing good. A Christian is like a bird that would be flying up, but hath a string tied to its legs to hinder it; so he would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire, but sin hinders him, *Rom. vii. 15. The good that I would, I do not.* A Christian is like a ship that is under sail, and at anchor; grace would sail forward, but sin is the anchor that holds it back. (2.) Sin is more active in its sphere than grace: how stirring was lust in *David*, when his grace lay dormant? (3.) Sin sometimes gets the mastery, and leads a saint captive, *Rom. vii. 15. The evil that I would not, that I do.* Paul was like a man carried down the stream, and could not bear up against it. How oft is a child of God overpowered with pride and passion? Therefore Paul calls sin, a law in his members, *Rom. vii. 24.* it binds as a law; it hath a kind of jurisdiction over the soul, as *Cæsar* had over the senate. (4.) Sin defiles the soul, it is like a stain to beauty, it turns the soul's azure brightness into sable. (5.) Sin debilitates us, it disarms us of our strength, *2 Sam. iii. 39. I am this day weak, tho' anointed king:* so, tho' a saint be crowned with grace, yet he is weak, tho' anointed a spiritual king. (6.) Sin is ever restless, *Gal. v. 17. The flesh lusts against the spirit.* It is an inmate that is always quarrelling: like *Marcellus*, that Roman captain, of whom *Hannibal* said, whether he did beat or was beaten, he would never be quiet. (7.) Sin adheres to us, we cannot get rid of it; it may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall; tho' the roots are pulled up, yet there are some fibres, some strings of it in the joint of the stone-work which cannot be gotten out. (8.) Sin mingles with our duties and graces; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. This makes a child of God weary of his life, and makes him water his couch with his tears, to think sin so strong a party, and he should often offend that God whom he loves; this made Paul cry out, *Miser ego homo!* O wretched man that I am! Hence Paul did not cry out of his affliction, of his prison-chain, but of the body of sin. Now a believer at death shall be freed from sin: he is not taken away in, but from his sins; he shall never have a vain, proud thought more; he shall never grieve the spirit of God any more: sin brought death into the world; and death shall carry sin out of the

world. The *Persians* had a certain day in the year in which they killed all serpents and venomous creatures: such a day will the day of death be to a believer: it will destroy all his sins, which, like so many serpents, have stung him. Death smites a believer, as the angel did *Peter*, it made his chains fall off: so death makes all the chains of sin fall off, *Acts xii. 7.* Believers at death are made perfect in holiness, *Heb. xii. 23. The spirits of just men made perfect.* At death the souls of believers recover their virgin-purity: O what a blessed privilege is this, to be *sine macula et ruga*, without spot or wrinkle! *Eph. v. 27.* to be purer than the sun-beams, to be as free from sin as the angels. This makes a believer so desirous to have his pass to be gone; he would fain live in that pure air, where no black vapours of sin arise.

2. At death the saints shall be freed from all the troubles and incumbrances to which this life is subject. Sin is the seed sown, and trouble is the harvest reaped, *Eurip.* life and trouble are married together; there is more in life to wean us than to tempt us. Parents divide a portion of sorrow to their children, and yet leave enough for themselves. *Job v. 7. Man is born to trouble*, he is heir to it, it is his birth-right. you may as well separate weight from lead, as trouble from the life of man. *Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?* Aug. King *Henry's* emblem, a crown hung in a bush of thorns: there is a far greater proportion of bitterness than pleasure in this life, *Prov. vii. 17. I have perfumed my bed with myrrhe, aloes, and cinnamon.* For one sweet ingredient there were two bitter; for the cinnamon, there were myrrhe and aloes. A man's grace will not exempt him from troubles, *Gen. xlvii. 9. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* Tho' he was a godly patriarch, tho' he had met with God, *Gen. xxxii. 30.* He named the name of the place *Peniel*; for *I have seen God face to face*: yet he had his troubles; *Few and evil*, &c. There are many things to im-bitter life and cause trouble, and death frees us from all. 1. *Care.* The mind is full of perplexed thoughts, how to bring about such a design: how to prevent such an evil: the Greek word for *care*, comes from a primitive in the Greek, that signifies *To cut the heart in pieces.* Care doth disencumber the mind, waste the spirits: no such bitter bread as the bread of carefulness, *Ezek. xii. 19.* Care is a spiri-  
tual

tual canker, which eats out the comfort of life: death is the cure of care. 2. *Fear*: fear is the ague of the soul, which sets it a shaking, 1 John iv. 15. *There is torment in fear*. Fear is like *Prometheus* his vulture, it gnaws upon the heart. There is a distrustful fear, a fear of want; and a distracting fear, a fear of danger; and a discouraging fear, a fear God doth not love us. These fears leave sad impressions upon the mind; now at death a believer is freed from these torturing fears; he now knows he is passed from death to life; he is as far from fear, as the damned are from hope: the grave buries a Christian's fear. 3. *Labour*, Eccl. i. 18. *All things are full of labour*. Some labour in the mine, others among the Muses; God hath made a law, *In the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat bread*: but death gives a believer a *quietus est*; it takes him off from his day-labour, Rev. xiv. 13. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours*. What needs working, when they have their reward? What needs fighting, when the crown is set on their head? they rest from their labour. 4. *Suffering*: believers are as a lily among thorns; as the dove among the birds of prey. The wicked have an antipathy against the righteous; and secret hatred will break forth into open violence, Gal. iv. 29. *He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit*. The dragon is described with seven heads and ten horns, Rev. xii. 3. He plotteth with the one, and pusheth with the other. But at death the godly shall be freed from the molestations of the wicked; they shall never be pestered with these vermin more, Job. iii. 17. *There (viz. in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling*. Death doth to a believer, as *Joseph of Arimathea* did to Christ, it takes him down from the cross, and gives him a writ of ease: the eagle, that flies high, cannot be stung with the serpent. Death gives the soul the wing of the eagle, that it flies above all these venomous serpents here below. 5. *Temptation*: tho' Satan be a conquered enemy, yet he is a restless enemy, 1 Pet. v. 8. He walketh about: the Devil is always going his diocess: he hath his snares and his darts; one he tempts with riches, another with beauty. It is no small trouble to be continually followed with temptations; as for a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted: but death will free a child of God from temptation, he shall never be vexed more with the old serpent. After

death hath shot its dart at us, tho' grace puts a believer out of the Devil's possession, only death frees him from the Devil's temptation. 6. *Sorrow*: a cloud of sorrow gathers in the heart, and drops into tears, Ps. xxxi. 10. *My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing*. It was a curse, Gen. iii. 16. *In sorrow thou shalt bring forth*. Many things occasion sorrow; sickness, law-suits, treachery of friends, disappointment of hopes, loss of estate, Ruth i. 20. *Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty*. Sorrow is the evil spirit that haunts us; the world is a *Bochim*, *Rachel* wept for her children; some grieve that they have no children, and others grieve that their children are undutiful. Thus we spend our years with sighing; 'tis a valley of tears: but death is the funeral of all our sorrows, Rev. vii. 17. *And God shall wipe away all tears*. Then Christ's spouse puts off her mourning: how can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, when the bridegroom shall be with them; Matth. ix. 15. Thus death gives a believer his *quietus est*; it frees him from sin and trouble: tho' the apostle calls death the last enemy, 1 Cor. xv. yet it is the best friend: *To me to die is gain*.

Use 1. See here that which may make a true saint willing to die: death will set him out of gun-shot; free him from sin and trouble: there is no cause of weeping, to leave a valley of tears; the world is the stage on which sin and misery are acted. Believers are here in a strange country, why then should they not be willing to go out of it? Death beats off their fetters of sin, and sets them free, who go weeping out of a goal: besides our own sins, the sins of others. The world is a place where Satan's seat is; a place where we see God daily dishonoured. *Let* (who was a bright star in a dark night) his righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the wicked, 2 Pet. iii. 8. To see God's sabbaths broken, his truths adulterated, his glory eclipsed, is that which wounds a godly heart: this made *David* cry out, Psalm cxx. 5. *Who is me that I dwell in Mesech, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar*: Kedar was Arabia, where were *Ishmael's* posterity; this was a cut to David's heart, to dwell there. O then be willing to depart out of the tents of Kedar.

2. The bodies of believers are united to Christ in the grave, and shall rest there till the



the resurrection. They are said to sleep in Jesus, 1 *Thes.* iv. 14. The dust of believers is part of Christ's body mystical. The grave is a dormitory or place of rest to the saints, where their bodies quietly sleep in Christ, till they are awakened out of their sleep by the trumpet of the archangel.

Qu. 2. *But how shall we know that we shall gain all this at death, to be freed from sin and trouble, and to have our bodies united to Christ in the grave?*

Ans. If we are believers, then we gain all this at death. *To me, saith Paul, to die is gain:* to me, *quatenus*, a believer. Are we such? Have we this blessed faith? Faith, wherever it is, is operative. Lapidaries say, there is no precious stone but hath *virtutem insitam*, some hidden virtue in it: so I may say of faith, it hath some secret virtue in it: it anchors the soul on Christ: it hath both a justifying and sanctifying virtue in it; it fetcheth blood out of Christ's sides to pardon, and water out of his sides to purge: it works by love; it constrains to duty, it makes the head study for Christ, the tongue

confess him, the hands work for him. I have read of a father who had three sons, and, being to die, left in his will all his estate to that son who could find his ring with the jewel which had an healing virtue. The case was brought before the judges; the two elder sons counterfeited a ring, but the younger son brought the true ring, which was proved by the virtue of it: whereupon his father's estate went to him. To this ring I may compare faith: there is a counterfeit faith in the world; but if we can find this ring of faith which hath the healing virtue in it, to purify the heart, this is the true faith which gives us an interest in Christ, and entitles us to all these privileges at death, to be freed from sin and sorrow, and to have our bodies united to Christ, while they are in the grave.

3. I should now come to the third privilege at death, the souls of believers pass immediately into glory. Where I shall lead you to the top of mount *Pisgah*, and give you a short view of the glory of heaven.



## A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AFTER DEATH.

PHIL. i. 21. *And to die is gain.*

AT death the souls of believers pass into Glory: death brings *malorum omnium ademptionem: omnium adeptionem*; death is the day-break of eternal brightness. And here I shall lead you to the top of mount *Pisgah*, and give you a glimpse of the holy land.

Qu. 1. *What is comprehended in glory?*

Ans. Glory is *status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus*, Boetius. It is a perfect state of bliss, which consists in the accumulation and heaping together all those good things which immortal souls are capable of. And truly here I am at a loss; all that I can say falls short of the celestial glory. *Apelles's* pencil cannot delineate it; angels tongues cannot express it: we shall never understand glory fully, till we are in heaven: only let me give you some dark views, and some imperfect lineaments of that state of glory the saints shall arrive at after death.

1. The first and most sublime part of the glory of heaven, is the full and sweet fruition of God: *ipse Deus sufficit ad proemium*. Aug. We are apt to think the happiness of heaven is in being free from pain and misery: but the very quintessence of happiness, is the enjoyment and fruition of God; this is the diamond-ring of glory: God is an infinite inexhaustible fountain of joy; and to have him, is to have all. Now the enjoying of God implies three things.

1. It implies our seeing of God.
2. Our loving of God.
3. God's loving of us.

1. The enjoying of God implies our seeing of God, 1 *John* iii. 2. *We shall see him as he is*: Here we see him as he is not; not mutable, mortal; there as he is.

Qu. *How shall we see God?*

Ans. 1. We shall see him intellectually, with the

the eyes of our mind. This divines call the beatifical vision; we shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully. If there were not such an intellectual sight of God, then, how do the spirits of just men made perfect see him? This sight of God will be very glorious; as when a king, on his coronation day, shews himself in all his royalty and magnificence.

2. We shall corporally behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ: and if it be a pleasant thing to behold the sun, *Ecc. xi. 7.* then, how blessed a sight will it be to behold the sun of righteousness; to see Christ clothed in our human nature, sitting in glory above the angels! *Solomon saith, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, Ecc. i. 8.* But sure the eyes of the saints will be satisfied with seeing that orient brightness which shall shine from the beautiful body of Christ. It must needs be satisfying, because through Christ's flesh some rays and beams of the Godhead shall gloriously display themselves. God's excellent majesty would overwhelm us; but through the vail of Christ's flesh we shall behold the divine glory.

3. Our seeing God will be transforming. We shall so see him, as to be in some measure assimilated and changed into his image, *1 John iii. 2. We shall be like him.* If, when *Moses* was with God on the mount, and had but some imperfect sight of his glory, *Moses's face shined, Exod. xxxiv. 33.* How shall the saints glorified shine, being always in God's presence, and having some beams of his glory put upon them! *We shall be like him.* One that is deformed, may look on beauty, and not be made beautiful: but the saints shall so see God, as that sight shall transform them into his likeness, *Pf. xvii. 15. When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.* Not that the saints shall partake of God's essence: for as the iron in the fire is made fiery, yet remains iron still; so the saints, by beholding God's majesty, shall be made glorious creatures, but yet creatures still.

4. Our seeing of God in heaven will be unvariable. Let a man see the rarest sight that is, he will be soon cloyed; when he comes into a garden, and sees delicious walks, fair arbours, pleasant flowers, within a little while he grows weary: but it is not so in heaven; there is no surfeit, *ibi nec fames nec fastidium, Bern.* The saints will never be weary of their prospect, *viz.* of seeing God; for, God being infinite, there shall every moment be new and fresh de-

lights springing from God into the souls of the glorified.

II. The second thing implied in our enjoying God, is our *loving of God.* It is a saint's grief, that his heart is like the frozen ocean, that he can melt no more in love to God; but in heaven the saints shall be like seraphims burning in divine love: love is a pleasant affection; *fear hath torment in it, 1 John iv. 18.* Love hath joy in it. To love beauty, is delightful: God's amazing beauty will attract the saints love, and it will be their heaven to love him.

III. The third thing implied in enjoying God, is *God's loving us.* Were there glory in God, yet, if there were not love, it would much eclipse the joys of heaven: but *God is love, 1 John iv. 16.* The saints glorified cannot love so much as they are loved. What is their love to God's? What is their star to this sun? God doth love his people on earth, when they are black as well as comely; they have their imperfections; O how intirely will he love them, when they are without *spot, or wrinkle?* *Eph. v. 27.*

1. This is the felicity of heaven, to be in the sweet embraces of God's love; to be the *Hephzibah*, the delight of the king of glory; to be sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Then the saints shall know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, *Eph. iii. 19.* From this glorious manifestation of God's love, will flow infinite joy into the souls of the blessed: therefore heaven is called *entering into the joy of our Lord, Matth. xxv. 21.* The seeing of God, the loving of God, and being beloved of God, will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints, as is unspeakable and full of glory, *1 Pet. i. 8. In Deo quadam dulcedine delictatur anima, ino rapitur, Aug.* Now the saints spend their years with sighing, they weep over their sins and afflictions; then their water shall be turned into wine, then the vessels of mercy shall be filled and run over with joy; then they shall have their palm-branches and harps in their hand, *Rev. xiv. 2.* in token of their triumphs and rejoicing.

2. The second thing comprehended in glory, is the good society there. *First,* There are the angels; every star adds to the light; those blessed cherubims will welcome us to paradise. If the angels rejoiced so at the conversion of the elect,



elect, how will they rejoice at their coronation !  
*Secondly*, There is the company of the saints,  
*Heb. xii. 23. The spirits of just men made perfect.*

*Qu. Whether shall the saints in glory know each other ?*

*Ans.* Certainly they shall ; for our knowledge in heaven shall not be diminished but encreased. We shall not only know our friends and godly relations, but those glorified saints which we never saw before : it must be so ; for society without acquaintance is not comfortable : and of this opinion were *St. Austin, Anselm, Luther*. And indeed the scripture seems to hint so much to us ; for, if *Peter* in the transfiguration knew *Moses* and *Elias*, whom he never saw before, *Matth. xvii. 4.* then surely in heaven the saints shall know one another, and be infinitely delighted in each others company.

3. The third thing comprehended in glory, is perfection in holiness. Holiness is the beauty of God and angels, it makes heaven : What is happiness but the quintessence of holiness ? Here a Christian is imperfect, he cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. He is said to receive but *primitias spiritus*, the first-fruits of the spirit, grace in *feri*, *Rom. viii. 23.* But at death believers shall arrive at perfection of grace : then this sun shall be in its meridian splendor ; then they shall not need to pray for increase of grace, for they shall be as the angels ; their light shall be clear as well as their joy full.

4. The fourth thing in glory is dignity and honour ; they shall reign as kings : therefore the saints glorified are said to have their *insignia regalia*, their ensigns of royalty, their white robes and their crown, *2 Tim. iv. 7. Cesar*, after his victories, in token of honour, had a chair of ivory set for him in the senate, and a throne in the theatre ; the saints, having obtained their victories over sin and satan, shall be enthroned with Christ in the emperian heaven. To sit with Christ, denotes safety ; to sit on the throne, dignity, *Rev. iii. 21. This honour have all the saints.*

5. The fifth thing in glory, is the harmony and union among the heavenly inhabitants. The devil cannot get his cloven foot into heaven ; he cannot conjure up any storms of contention there : there shall be perfect union : there *Calvin* and *Luther* are agreed ; there is no jarring string in the heavenly music ; there is nothing to make any difference, no pride or envying there.

Though one star may differ from another, one may have a greater degree of glory, yet every vessel shall be full : there shall the saints and angels sit as olive-plants round about their father's table in love and unity. Then shall they join together in consort, then shall the loud anthems of praise be sung in the heavenly quire.

6. The sixth thing in glory, is a blessed rest, *Heb. iv. 9. There remains a rest. Foelix transitus a labore ad requiem.* Here we can have no rest, tossed and turned as a ball, on racket *2 Cor. iv. 8. We are troubled on every side.* How can a ship rest in a storm ? But after death the saints get into their haven. Every thing is quiet in the centre ; God is *centrum quietativum animae*, as the schoolmen, *The centre where the soul doth sweetly acquiesce.* A Christian, after his weary marches and battles, shall put off his bloody armour, and rest himself upon the bosom of Jesus, that bed of perfume : when death hath given the saints the wings of a dove, then they shall fly away to paradise, and be at rest.

7. The seventh thing in glory, is eternity, *2 Cor. iv. 17. An eternal weight of glory.* 1<sup>st</sup>, Glory is a weight : the Hebrew word for glory (*quod significat pondus*) is a weight : God must make us able to bear it. 2<sup>dly</sup>, *An eternal weight.* Glory is such a manna as doth not breed worms. If the saints glory in heaven were but for a time, and they were in fear of losing it, it would eclipse and imbitter the joys of heaven ; but eternity is written upon their joys. The garland made of flowers of paradise fades not, *1 Pet. v. 4.* I have read of a river which they call the day-river, in which time it runs with a full torrent, but at night it is dried up ; such are all earthly comforts, they run with a full stream all the day-time of life, but at the night of death they are dried up : but the saints glorified shall drink of the rivers of pleasure for evermore, *Psf. xvi. 11.* Eternity is the heaven of heavens ; *in fine gaudium erit sine fine*, *Bern.* The joys of heaven as overflowing, so ever-flowing.

*Qu. 2. When do believers enter upon possession of glory ?*

*Ans.* They pass immediately after death into glory. Some hold, with the *Platonists* and *Lucianists*, that the soul dies : but many of the sober heathens believed the soul's immortality. The *Romans*, when their great men died, caused an eagle to be let loose, and fly about in the air, signifying hereby that the soul was immortal, and did not die with the body. Christ tells

us the soul is not capable of killing, *Luke xii. 4.* therefore not of dying. And as the soul doth not die, so neither doth it sleep in the body for a time: if the soul be at death absent from the body, *2 Cor. v. 8.* then it cannot sleep in the body. There is an immediate passage from death to glory; it is but winking, and we shall see God, *Luke xxiii. 43. This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* By paradise is meant heaven; the third heaven into which *Paul* was wrapped (which all hold to be the heaven of the blessed) was called paradise, *2 Cor. xii. 4.* Now saith Christ to the thief on the cross, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* His body could not be there, for it was laid in the grave; but it was spoke of his soul, that it should be immediately after death in heaven. Let none be so vain as to talk of *purgatory*; a soul purged by Christ's blood, needs no fire of *purgatory*, but goes immediately from a death-bed into a glorified state.

*Use. 1.* See what little cause believers have to fear death, when it brings such glorious benefits; *to me to die is gain.* Why should the saints fear their preferment? Is it not a blessed thing to see God, to love God, and to ly for ever in the bosom of divine love? Is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven? Why should the saints be afraid of their blessings? Is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Now is but the contract, at death is the marriage-supper of the lamb, *Rev. xix. 9.* What hurt doth death, but takes us from among fiery serpents, and places us among angels? What hurt doth it do, but to clothe us with a robe of immortality? hath he any wrong done, that hath his sackcloth pulled off, and hath cloth of gold put upon him? fear not dying, who cannot live but by dying.

*Use. 2.* You who are real saints, whose hearts are purified by faith, spend much time in musing upon these glorious benefits which you shall have by Christ at death. Thus might you,

by a contemplative life, begin the life of angels here, and be in heaven before your time. *Eudoxius* was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it: What should we contemplate but celestial glory, when we shall see God face to face? *David* was got above the ordinary sort of men, he was in the altitudes, *Pf. cxxxix. 18. I am ever with thee.* A true saint every day takes a turn in heaven, his thoughts and desires are like cherubims flying up to paradise. Can men of the world so delight in looking upon their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of heaven take more delight in contemplating their glory in reversion? Could we send forth faith as a spy, and every day view the glory of the Jerusalem above, how would it rejoyce us, as it doth the heir to think of the inheritance which is to come into his hand shortly?

*Use 3. Consolation.* This is that which may comfort the saints in two cases.

1. Under their wants; they abound only in wants; the meal is almost spent in the barrel: but be patient till death, and you shall have a supply of all your wants; you shall have a kingdom, and be as rich as heaven can make you. He who hath the promise of an estate, after the expiring of a few years, though at present he hath nothing to help himself, yet comforts himself with this, that shortly he shall have an estate come into his hands, *1 John ii. 3. It doth not yet appear what we shall be;* we shall be enamelled with glory, and be as rich as the angels.

2. A true saint, is (as *Luther*) *Haeres crucis*; but this may make us go cheerfully through our sufferings; there are great things laid up in store: there is glory coming, which *eye hath not seen*; we shall drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of heaven. Though now we drink in a wormwood cup, yet here is sugar to sweeten it: we shall taste of those joys of paradise which exceed our faith, and may be better felt than they can be expressed.



- OF THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN v. 28. *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Q. XXII. **W**HAT benefits shall believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

*Ans.* 1. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory.

2. They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.

3. They shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God for ever.

*I. The bodies of believers shall be raised up to glory.*] The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental article of our faith; the apostle puts it among the principles of the doctrine of Christ, *Heb. vi. 2.* The body shall rise again: we are not so sure to rise out of our beds, as we are to rise out of our graves. The saved body shall arise again. Some hold that the soul shall be clothed with a new body; but then it were improper to call it a resurrection, it should be rather a creation, *Job xix. 26. Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.* Not in another flesh, but my flesh, *1 Cor. xv. 53. This corruptible shall put on incorruption.*

Qu. 2. By what arguments may the resurrection be proved?

*Ans. Argument 1.* By scripture, *John vi. 44. I will raise him up at the last day. Isa. xxv. 8. He will swallow up death in victory.* That is, by delivering our bodies from the captivity of the grave, wherein death for a time had power over them, *1 Thess. iv. 14. Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*

*Arg. 2. Christ is risen:* therefore the bodies of the saints must rise. Christ did not rise from the dead as a private person, but as the public head of the church; and the head being raised, the rest of the body shall not always ly in the grave, Christ's rising is a pledge of our resurrection, *2 Cor. iv. 14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus.* Christ is called the first-fruits of them that sleep,

*1 Cor. xv. 20.* As the first fruits is a sure evidence that the harvest is coming on; so the resurrection of Christ is a sure evidence of the rising of our bodies out of the grave. Christ cannot be perfect as he is Christ mystical, unless his members be raised with him.

*Arg. 3.* In respect of God's justice. If God be a just God, then he will reward the bodies of the saints as well as the souls. It cannot be imagined that the souls of believers should be glorified, and not their bodies: they have served God with their bodies, their bodies have been members of holiness; their eyes have dropped tears for sin, their hands have relieved the poor, their tongues have set forth God's praise; therefore justice and equity require that their bodies should be crowned as well as their souls: and how can that be, unless they are raised from the dead?

*Arg. 4.* If the body did not rise again, then a believer should not be compleatly happy; for tho' the soul can subsist without the body, yet it hath *appetitum unionis*, a desire of reunion with the body; and it is not fully happy till it be clothed with the body: therefore undoubtedly the body shall rise again. If the soul should go to heaven, and not the body, then a believer should be only half-saved.

*Obj. 1.* But some say, as the Virgin Mary to the angel, *How can this be?* so, how can it be, that the body, which is consumed to ashes, should rise again?

*Ans.* It doth not oppose reason, but transcend it: there are some resemblances of the resurrection in nature. The corn, which is sown in the ground, dies before it springs up, *1 Cor. xv. 36. That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.* In winter the fruits of the earth die, in spring there is a resurrection of them: Noah's olive-tree springing after the flood, was a lively emblem of the resurrection. After the passion of our Lord, many of the saints which

slept

slept in the grave arose, *Matth. xxvii. 52.* God can more easily raise the body out of the grave, than we can awake a man out of sleep.

*Obj. 2.* But when the dust of many are mingled together; how is it possible that a separation should be made and the same numerical body arise?

*Ans.* If we believe God can create, then he can distinguish the dust of one body from another: do we not see the chymist can, out of several metals mingled together, as gold, silver, alchemy, extract the one from the other, the silver from the gold, the alchemy from the silver, and can reduce every metal to its own kind? And shall we not much more believe, that when our bodies are mingled and confounded with other substances, the wise God is able to make an extraction, and re-invest every soul with its own body?

*Qu. 3.* *Shall none but the bodies of the righteous be raised?*

*Ans.* Yes, all that are in the graves shall hear Christ's voice, and shall come forth, *Acts xxiv. 15.* There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, *Rev. xx. 12.* *I saw the dead both small and great, stand before God.* But tho' all shall be raised out of their graves, yet all shall not be raised alike.

1. The bodies of the wicked shall be raised with ignominy; those bodies which on the earth did tempt and allure others with their beauty, shall be at the resurrection loathsome to behold; they shall be ghastly spectacles, as the phrase is, *Isa. lxvi. 24.* *They shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.* But the bodies of the saints shall be raised with honour, *1 Cor. xv. 43.* *It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.* The saints bodies then shall shine as sparkling diamonds, *Matth. xiii. 43.* *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.*

2. The bodies of the saints shall arise out of their graves with triumph: the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave with trembling; as being to receive their fatal doom; but the godly, when they awake out of the dust, shall sing for joy, *Isa. xxvi. 19.* *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.* When the arch-angel's trumpet sounds, then the saints shall sing; the bodies of believers shall come out of the grave to be made happy, as the chief butler came out of the prison, and was restored to all his dignity at the court; but the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave, as

the chief baker out of prison, to be executed, *Gen. xl. 22.*

*Use 1.* Believe this doctrine of the resurrection; and that the same body that dies shall rise again, and with the soul be crowned. Without the belief of this, *tota corrui religio*, "all religion falls to the ground," *1 Cor. xv. 14.* If the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen, and then our faith is vain.

*Use 2. Comfort.* The body shall rise again; this was *Job's* comfort, *Job xix. 26.* *Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.* The body is sensible of joy, as well as the soul; and indeed we shall not be in all our glory, till our bodies are re-united to our souls. O consider what joy there will be at the re-uniting the body and the soul at the resurrection; look what sweet embraces of joy were between old *Jacob* and *Joseph*, when they first saw one another, *Gen. xlv. 29.* such, and infinitely more, will there be, when the body and soul of a saint shall meet together at the resurrection. How will the body and soul greet one another? what a welcome will the soul give to the body? O blessed body! when I prayed, thou didst attend my prayers with hands lifted up, and knees bowed down; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now shalt reign; thou wert sown in dishonour, but now art raised in glory. O my dear body! I will enter into thee again, and be eternally married to thee.

*Use 3.* The resurrection of the body is a cordial when a Christian lies a dying. Thy body, tho' it drop into the sepulchre, it shall revive and flourish as an herb in the resurrection; the grave is a bed of dust, where the bodies of the saints sleep; but they shall be awakened by the trump of the arch-angel. The grave is your long home, but not your last home: tho' death strip you of your beauty, yet at the resurrection you shall have it restored again. As *David*, when he found *Saul* asleep, took away his spear and cruse of water, but when he awoke he restored them again, *1 Sam. xxxvi. 16.* so, tho' at death all our strength and beauty be taken away, yet at the resurrection God will restore all again in a more glorious manner.

*Qu. 4.* *But how shall we know that our bodies shall be raised to a glorious resurrection?*

*Ans.* If we have a part in the first resurrection, *Rev. xx. 6.* *Blessed is he that hath a part in the first resurrection.* *Qu. What is meant*



*meant by this?* *Ans.* It is a rising by repentance out of the grave of sin: he who lies buried in sin, can have little hope of a joyful resurrection; his body shall be raised, but not in glory. O then, ask conscience, have you a part in the first resurrection? hath the Spirit entered into you, and lifted you up? hath it raised you out of your unbelief? hath it raised your hearts above the earth? this is the first resurrection; and if your souls are thus spiritually raised, then your bodies shall be gloriously raised; and shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven. Regeneration makes way for a glorious resurrection.

*Use.* Seeing you expect your bodies should arise to glory, keep your bodies unspotted from sin. Shall a drunken body rise to glory? shall an unclean body rise to glory? shall a thievish body steal into heaven? O keep your bodies pure: keep your eyes from unchaste glances, your hands from bribes, your tongues from slander: defile not your bodies, which you hope shall rise one day to glory. Your bodies are the members of Christ; and hear what the apostle saith, *1 Cor. vi. 15. Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.* O keep your bodies unspotted, let them be instruments of righteousness, *1 Cor. vi. 20. Glorify God in your body.* If your bodies glorify God, God will glorify your bodies.

*Qu. 5. But seeing our bodies must be laid in the grave, and they may ly many years rotting there before the resurrection; what may support and comfort us in this case?*

*Ans.* 1. That God will not leave his people in the grave. Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not; God will go to the grave with us, and watch over our dead bodies, and take care of our ashes. *Rissah* watched over the dead bodies of the sons of *Saul*, and guarded them against the ravenous fowls of the air, *2 Sam. xxi. 10.* Thus the Lord watcheth over the dead bodies of the saints, and looks to it, that none of their dust be missing. Christian, thou hast a God to watch over thy body when thou art dead.

2. The bodies of the saints in the grave, though separated from their souls, are united to Christ. The dust of a believer is part of Christ's mystical body.

3. When the bodies of the saints are in the sepulchre, their souls are in paradise; the soul

doth not sleep in the body, but returns to God that gave it, *Ecc. xii. 7.* The soul immediately partakes of those joys the blessed angels do: when the body returns to dust, the soul returns to rest; when the body is sleeping, the soul is triumphing; when the body is buried, the soul is crowned: as the spies were sent before to taste of the fruits of the land, *Numb. xiii.* so at death the soul is sent before into heaven, to taste of the fruit of the holy land.

4. When God's time is come, the graves shall deliver up their dead, *Rev. xx. 13.* When the judge sends, the goaler must deliver up his prisoners, as God said to *Jacob*, *Gen. xvi. 4. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will surely bring thee up again.* So the Lord will go down with us into the grave, and will surely bring us up again.

5. Tho' the bodies of the saints shall rot and be loathsome in the grave, yet afterwards they shall be made illustrious and glorious. Concerning this consider,

1. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be comely and beautiful. The body of a saint in this life may be deformed: those whose minds are adorned with virtue, yet may have mis-shapen bodies; as the finest cloth may have the coarsest list; but this deformed body shall be amiable and beautiful. This beauty consists in two things; 1. Perfection of parts. There shall be a full proportion of all the members: in this life there is oft a defect of members; the eye is lost, the arm is cut off; but in the resurrection all parts of the body shall be restored again: therefore the resurrection is called the time of restoring of all things, *Acts iii. 19. Malcha's ear cut, restituit.* 2. Clarity and splendor: the bodies of the saints shall have a graceful majesty in them; they shall be like *Stephen*, whose face shined as if it had been the face of an angel, *Acts vi. 15.* Nay, they shall be made like Christ's glorious body, *Phil. iii. 21.*

2. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be free from the necessities of nature, as hunger and thirst, *Rev. vii. 16. They shall hunger no more.* *Moses* on the mount was so filled with the glory of God, that he needed not the recruits of nature. Much more in heaven shall the bodies of the saints, so filled with God's glory, be upheld without food.

3. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be swift and nimble. Our bodies on earth

earth are dull and heavy in their motion; then they shall be swift, and made fit to ascend, as the body of *Elias*, in the air. Now the body is a clog; in heaven it shall be a wing: we shall be as the angels, *Matth. xxii. 30.* And how nimble are they? The angel *Gabriel* in a short time came from heaven to the earth, *Dan. ix. 21.* As the helm turns the ship instantly whither the steersman will; so the body in an instant will move which way the soul will.

4. The bodies of the saints, at the resurrection, shall be very firm and strong, *1 Cor. xv. 42. It is raised in power.* Through frequent labour and sickness, the strongest body begins to languish: but at the resurrection we shall be of a strong constitution; then there will be no weariness in the body, nor faintness in the spirits. This may comfort you who now conflict

with many bodily weaknesses. This weak body shall be raised in power; the body, which is now a weak reed, shall be like a rock.

5. The bodies of the saints at the resurrection shall be immortal, *Cor. xv. 53. This mortal shall put on immortality*; our bodies shall run parallel with eternity, *Luke xx. 36. Neither can they die any more.* Heaven is an healthful climate, there is no bill of mortality there. If a physician could give you a receipt to keep you from dying, what sums of money would you give? At the resurrection Christ shall give the saints such a receipt, *Rev. xxi. 4. There shall be no more death.*

II. The second privilege believers shall have at the resurrection, is, *They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.*

## OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

Q. XXIII. *WHAT benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

*Ans.* 1. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory, and shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment, and crowned with the full and perfect enjoyment of God to all eternity.

2. *They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.* This is to be laid down for a position, that there shall be a day of judgment, *1 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.* This is the grand assizes; the greatest appearance that ever was: Now Adam shall see all his posterity at once. We must all appear; the greatness of men's persons doth not exempt them from Christ's tribunal; kings and captains are brought in trembling before the Lamb's throne, *Rev. vi. 15.* We must all appear, and appear in our own persons; not by a proxy.

Qu. 1. *How doth it appear that there shall be a day of judgment?*

*Ans.* Two ways. 1. By the suffrage of Scripture, *Eccl. xii. 9. 12, 13. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.* *Psal. xcvi. 13. For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth.* The reduplication denotes the certainty, *Dan. vii. 9. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and*

*the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow.* The judgment was set, and the books were opened.

2. It appears from the petty sessions kept in a man's own conscience; when a man doth virtuously, conscience doth excuse him, when evil, conscience doth arraign and condemn him. Now, what is this private session kept in the court of conscience, but a certain fore-runner of the general day of judgment, when all the world shall be summoned to God's tribunal?

Qu. *Why must there be a day of judgment?*

*Ans.* That there may be a day of retribution, when God may render to every one according to his work. Things seem to be carried very unequally in the world: the wicked do so prosper, as if they were rewarded for being evil; and the godly do so suffer, as if they were punished for being good. Therefore, for the vindicating of God's justice, there must be a day, wherein there shall be a righteous distribution of punishments and rewards to men, according to their actions.

Qu. 3. *Who shall be judge?*

*Ans.* The Lord Jesus Christ, *John v. 22. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.* It is an article in our creed, that *Christ shall come to judge the quick and the dead.* It is a great honour put upon Christ; he who was himself



himself judged, shall now be judge, he who once hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench. Christ is fit to be judge, as he partakes both of the manhood and godhead.

1. Of the manhood : being clothed with the human nature, he may be visibly seen of all. It is requisite the judge should be seen, *Rev. i. 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.*

2. As he partakes of the Godhead : he is of infinite prudence to understand all causes brought before him ; and of infinite power to execute offenders. He is described with seven eyes, *Zech. iii. 9.* to denote his prudence ; and a rod of iron, *Pf. ii. 9.* to denote his power : he is so wise, that he cannot be deluded ; and so strong, that he cannot be resisted.

Qu. 4. *When will the court sit, when will the time of judgment be ?*

Ans. For the *quando*, or the time of the general judgment, it is a secret kept from the angels, *Mat. xxiv. 36. Of that day and hour knows no man, no not the angels of heaven.* But this is sure, it cannot be far off : one great sign of the approach of the day of judgment, is, *That iniquity shall abound*, *Mat. xxiv.* sure then this day is near at hand, for iniquity did never more abound than in this age : lust grows hot, and love grows cold. This is certain, when the elect are converted, then Christ will come to judgment : as he that owes a ferry-boat, stays till all the passengers are taken into his boat, and then he rows away : so Christ stays till all the elect are gathered in, and then he will hasten away to judgment.

Qu. 5. *What shall be the modus or manner of trial ?*

Ans. 1. The citing of men to the court. The dead are cited as well as the living. Men, when they die, avoid the censure of our law-courts ; but, at the last-day, the dead are cited to God's tribunal, *Rev. xx. 12. I saw the dead small and great stand before God.* This citing of men will be by the sound of a trumpet, *1 Thess. iv. 16.* And this trumpet will sound so loud, that it will raise men out of their graves, *Mat. xxiv. 31.* Such as will not hear the trumpet of the gospel sound in their ears, *repent and believe*, shall hear the trumpet of the archangel sounding, *arise and be judged.*

2. The approach of the judge to the bench.

First, This will be terrible to the wicked. How can a guilty prisoner endure the sight of the judge ? If *Felix* trembled when *Paul* preach-

ed of judgment, *Acts xxiv. 25.* how will sinners tremble when they shall see Christ come to judgment ? Christ is described (sitting in judgment) with a fiery stream issuing from him, *Dan. vii. 10.* Now the lamb of God will be turned into a lion ; the sight of Christ will strike terror into sinners. As when *Joseph* said to his brethren, *I am Joseph whom ye sold into Egypt, they were troubled at his presence*, *Gen. xlv. 6.* Now how did their hearts smite them for their sin ! so, when Christ shall come to judge men, and say, *I am Jesus whom ye sinned against, I am Jesus whose laws ye have broken, whose blood ye despised ; I am now come to judge you :* O what horror and amazement will take hold of sinners ! they will be troubled at the presence of their judge.

Secondly, The approach of Christ to the bench of judicature will be comfortable to the righteous. (1.) Christ will come in splendor and great glory. His first coming in the flesh was obscure, *Isa. liii. 2.* He was like a prince in disguise ; but his second coming will be illustrious, *he shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels*, *Mark viii. 38.* O what a bright day will that be, when such a number of angels, those morning-stars, shall appear in the air, and Christ the sun of righteousness shall shine in splendor above the brightest cherub ? (2.) Christ will come as a friend. Indeed, if the saints judge were their enemy, they might fear condemning : but he who loves them, and prayed for them, is their judge ; he who is their husband is their judge, therefore they need not fear but all things shall go well on their side.

Thirdly, The trial itself, which hath a dark and a light side. (1.) A dark side. It will fall heavy on the wicked : the judge being set, the books are opened, *Rev. xx. 12.* the book of conscience, and the book of God's remembrance ; and now the sinners charge being read, and all their sins laid open, their murder, drunkenness, uncleanness, Christ will say, sinner, what can you plead for yourselves, that the sentence of death should not pass ? The wicked being convicted will be speechless. Then follows that dismal sentence, *Mat. xxv. 41. Ite maledicti, depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* He that said to God, *depart from me ;* *Job. xxi. 14.* and to religion, *depart from me ;* must now hear that word pronounced from his judge, *depart from me ;* a dreadful sentence, but righteous,

*Pf. li.*

*Pf. li. 4.* The sinner himself shall cry, guilty: though the wicked have a sea of wrath, yet not one drop of injustice. And when once the sentence is past, it is irreversible, there is no appealing to an higher court. (2.) The trial hath a light side: it will be for the increasing the joy and happiness of the righteous. The day of judgment will be a day of jubilee to them.

I. At that day Christ their judge will own them by name. Those whom the world scorned, and looked upon as precisians and fools, Christ will take by the hand, and openly acknowledge them to be his favourites. What is Christ's *confessing of men*, Luke xii. 8. but his openly acknowledging them to be precious in his eyes?

II. Christ as judge will plead for them. It is not usual to be both judge and advocate, to sit on the bench and plead; but it shall be so at the day of judgment.

*First*, Christ will plead his own blood for the saints. *These persons, I have paid a price for, they are the travail of my soul, they have sinned, but my soul was made an offering for their sin.*

*Secondly*, Christ will vindicate them from all unjust censures. Here they were strangely misrepresented to the world, as proud, hypocritical, factious; *Paul* was called a seditious man, the head of a faction, *Act. xxiv. 5.* But at the day of judgment Christ will clear the saints innocency, then he will *bring forth their righteousness as the light*, *Pf. xxxvii. 6.* As he will wipe off tears from their eyes, so dust from their name. *Moses*, when he was charged with ambition, that *he took too much upon him*, comforted himself with this, *To-morrow will the Lord shew who are his*; *Numb. xvi. 5.* So may the saints, when reproached, comfort themselves with the day of judgment; *then will Christ say who are his*; then shall the saints come forth as the wings of a dove covered with silver.

*Thirdly*, Christ as judge will absolve them before men and angels, as *Pilate* said of Christ, *I find no fault in this man*, *John xviii. 38.* So will Christ say of the elect, *I find no fault in them*, I pronounce them righteous. Then follows, *come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom*, *Mat. xxv. 34.* As if Christ should say, *O ye happy ones, the delight of my soul, the fruit of my sufferings, stand no longer at the bar. Ye are heirs apparent of the crown of heaven, enter*

*and take possession.* At the hearing of this sentence, with what ravishing joy will the saints be filled? This word, *Come, ye blessed*, will be music to their ear, and a cordial to their heart.

*Fourthly*, Christ will mention before men and angels all the good deeds the saints have done, *Mat. xxv. 35. I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.* You that have wept in secret for sin, that have shewn any love to Christ's name, that have been rich in good works, Christ will take notice of it at the last day, and say, *well done, good and faithful servants.* He himself will be the herald to proclaim your praises; thus shall it be done to the man whom Christ delights to honour.

*Fifthly*, Christ will call his saints from the bar, to sit upon the bench with him to judge the world, *Jude 14. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all*, *1 Cor. vi. 2. Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?* The saints shall sit with Christ in judicature, as justices of peace with the judge; they shall applaud Christ's righteous sentence on the wicked, and, as it were, vote with Christ. This, as it is a great honour to the saints, so it must need add to the sorrows of the wicked, to see those whom they once hated and derided, to sit as judges upon them.

*Sixthly*, The saints shall be fully crowned with the enjoyment of God for ever. They shall be in his sweet presence, *in whose presence is fulness of joy*, *Pf. xvi. 11.* and this shall be for ever: the banner of God's love shall be eternally displayed: the joys of heaven are without intermission and expiration, *1 Thes. iv. 17. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

*Use.* As it is sad news to the wicked, they shall not stand in judgment, *Pf. i. 5.* They shall come to judgment, but they shall not stand in judgment, *viz.* they shall not stand acquitted, they shall not stand with boldness, but sneak and hang down their head, and not be able to look their judge in the face: so it is great consolation to the godly. When the apostle had said, *The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trumpet of God*; he presently adds, *wherefore comfort one another with these words*, *1 Thess. iv. 16, 18.*

1. The day of judgment is comfort, in respect of *weakness of grace*. A Christian is ready to be troubled, to see his grace so minute and imperfect; but, at the last day, if Christ find



but a drachm of true grace, it shall be accepted. If thine be true gold, though it be many grains too light, Christ will put his merits into the scales, and make it pass current.

2. It is a comfort to such of the saints who have met with *unrighteous judgment* in the world, who have been wronged of their estates in law-suits, or had their lives taken away by an *unrighteous sentence*; Christ will judge over things again, and will give a *righteous sentence*. If your estates have been taken away wrongfully, you shall be restored a thousand-fold at the day of judgment. If you have lost your lives for Christ, yet you shall not lose your crown; you shall wear a garland made of the flowers of paradise, which fade not away.

*Branch I.* Meditate much upon the day of judgment. Feathers swim upon the water, but gold sinks into it: light feathery Christians float in vanity, they mind not the day of judgment; but serious spirits sink deep into the thoughts of it.

1. The meditation of this last day would make us very sincere. We would then labour to approve our heart to God, the great judge and umpire of the world. It is easy to carry it fair before men, but there is no dissembling or prevaricating with God; he sees what the heart is, and will accordingly pass his verdict.

2. The meditation of Christ's coming to judge us, would keep us from *judging our brethren*. We are apt to judge others as to their final state; which is for men to step into Christ's place, and take his work out of his hand, *James iv. 12. Who art thou that judgest another?* Thou that passest a rash sentence upon another, thou must come thy self shortly to be judged, and then perhaps he may be acquitted, and thou condemned.

*Branch II.* So demean and carry yourselves, that at the day of judgment you may be sure to be acquitted, and have those glorious privileges the saints shall be crowned with.

*Qu. How is that?*

*Ans. 1.* If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, then, *1<sup>st</sup>*. Labour to get into Christ, *Phil. iii. 9. That I may be found in him.* Faith implants us into Christ, it ingarisons us in him and then *there's no condemnation*, *Rom. viii. 1.* There's no standing before Christ, but by being in Christ. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, Labour for humility. It is a kind of annihilation, *2 Cor. xii. 11. Though I be nothing.* Christian, hast thou

parts and abilities, and dost thou cover them with the vail of humility? as *Moses*, when his face shined, put a vail over it. If thou art humble, thou shalt be acquitted at the day of judgment, *Job. xxii. 29. He shall save the humble person.* An humble man judgeth himself for his sins, and Christ will acquit them who judge themselves.

2. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then keep a clear conscience. Do not load yourselves with guilt, and furnish your judge with matter against you. The Lord, saith *Paul*, hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world, *Acts xvii. 21.* And how would *Paul* fit himself for that day? *Acts xxiv. 16. Herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.* Be careful of the first and second table, be holy and just. Have hearts without false aims, and hands without false weights. Keep conscience as clear, as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it: they that sin against conscience; will be shy of their judge: such as take in prohibited goods, cannot endure to see the searchers that are appointed to open their packs. Christian, thy pack will be opened at the last day, I mean, thy conscience; and Christ is the searcher, to see what sins, what prohibited goods thou hast taken in; and then he proceeds to judgment. O! be sure to keep a good conscience; this is the best way to stand with boldness at the day of judgment. The voice of conscience is the voice of God: if conscience doth upon just grounds, acquit us, God will acquit us, *1 John iii. 21. If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

3. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then trade your talents for God's glory; honour him with your substance: relieve Christ's members: this is the way to be acquitted. He that had five talents traded with them, and made them five talents more; *his lord said unto him, well done good and faithful servant*, *Mat. xxv. 21.*

4. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, get an entire love to the saints, *1 John iii. 14. We know we are passed from death to life, &c.* Love is the truest touch-stone of sincerity. To love grace for grace, shews the spirit of God to be in man. Doth conscience witness for you? (Are you perfumed with this sweet spice of love?) Do you delight most in those in whom the image of God shines? Do you reverence

reverence their graces? Do you bear with their infirmities? A blessed evidence that you shall be acquitted at the day of judgment. We

know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.



## OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S REVEALED WILL.

DEUT. XXvii. 9, 10. *Take heed and hearken, O Israel, this Day thou art become the People of the Lord thy God; thou shalt therefore obey the Voice of the Lord thy God, and do his Commandments.*

Q. XXIV. **W**HAT is the duty that God requireth of man?

Ans. Obedience to his revealed will.

It is not enough to hear God's voice, but we must obey. Obedience is a part of that honour we owe to God, *Mal. i. 6. If I am a Father, where is my honour?* Obedience carries in it the life-blood of religion. *Obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments.* Obedience without knowledge is blind, and knowledge without obedience is lame. *Rachel* was fair to look upon, but, being barren, said, *Give me children, or I die*: so, if knowledge doth not bring forth the child of obedience, it will die, *1 Sam. xv. 22. To obey is better than sacrifice.* *Saul* thought it was enough for him to offer sacrifice, though he disobeyed God's command: no, *to obey is better than sacrifice.* God disclaims sacrifice, if obedience be wanting, *Jer. vii. 22. I spake not to your fathers concerning burnt-offerings, but this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice.* Not but that God did enjoin those religious rites of worship; but the meaning is, God looked chiefly at obedience; without which, sacrifice was but devout folly. The end why God hath given us his law, is obedience, *Lev. xviii. 4. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances.* Why doth a king publish an edict, but that it may be observed?

Qu. 1. *What is the rule of obedience?*

Ans. The written word that is proper obedience which the word requires; our obedience must correspond with the word, as the copy with the original. To seem to be zealous, if it be not according to the word, is not obedience, but will-worship. Popish traditions, which have no footing in the word, are abominable; and God will say, *Quis quæsit hæc?* Who hath required this at your hand? *Isa. i. 12.*

The apostle condemns the worshipping of angels, which had a show of humility, *Col. ii. 18.* The Jews might say they were loth to be so bold as to go to God in their own persons, they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, and desire them to present their petitions to God: this show of humility was hateful to God, because there was no word to warrant it.

Qu. 2. *What are the right ingredients in our obedience to make it acceptable? Or, how must it be qualified?*

Ans. 1. Obedience must be *cum animi prælubio*, free and chearful, else it is penance, not sacrifice, *Isa. i. 19. If ye be willing and obedient.* Tho' we serve God with weakness, let it be with willingness. You love to see your servants go cheerfully about your work, Under the law, God would have a *freewill-offering*, *Deut. xvi. 10.* Hypocrites obey God grudgingly, and against their will; they do *facere bonum*, but not *vellè*, *Cain* brought his sacrifice, but not his heart. 'Tis a true rule, *Quicquid cor non facit, non fit*; what the heart doth not do, is not done. Willingness is the soul of obedience; God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness. Cheerfulness shews that there is love in the duty; and love doth to our services, as the sun doth to the fruit, mellow and ripen them, and make them come off with a better relish.

2. Obedience must be devout and fervent, *Rom. xii. 11. Fervent in spirit, &c. Quæ ebullit præ ardore*; it alludes to water that boils over: so the heart must boil over with hot affections in the service of God. The glorious angels, who, for their burning in fervour and devotion, are called Seraphims; these God chooseth to serve him in heaven. The snail



under the law was unclean, because a dull slothful creature: obedience without fervency, is like a sacrifice without fire. Why should not our obedience be lively and fervent? God deserves the flower and strength of our affections. *Domitian* would not have his statue carved in wood or iron, but in gold; lively affections make golden services. It is fervency makes obedience acceptable; *Elijah* was fervent in spirit, and his prayers opened and shut heaven: and again he prayed, and fire fell on his enemies, *2 Kings* i. 10. *Elijah's* prayer fetched fire from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried fire up to heaven: *quicquid decorum ex fide proficiscitur*, Aug.

3. Obedience must be extensive, it must reach to all God's commands, *Pf.* cxix. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed*, (or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lo Ehash*, blush) *when I have respect to all thy commandments. Quicquid propter Deum fit æqualiter fit.* There is a stamp of divine authority upon all God's commands; and, if I obey one precept because God commands, I must obey all: true obedience runs through all the duties of religion, as the blood through all the veins, or the sun through all the signs of the zodiack. A good Christian makes gospel-piety and moral equity kiss each other. Herein some discover their hypocrisy, they will obey God in some things which are more facile, and may raise their repute; but other things they leave undone, *Mark* x. 21. *One thing is lacking, unum deest.* *Herod* would hear *John Baptist*, but not leave his incest: some will pray, but not give alms; others will give alms, but not pray, *Matth.* xxiii. 23. *Ye pay tithe of mint and anise, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.* The badger hath one foot shorter than the other: so these are shorter in some duties than in others. God likes not such partial servants, that will do some part of the work he sets them about, and leave the other undone.

4. Obedience must be sincere, *viz.* We must aim at the glory of God in it. *Finis specificat actionem*; in religion the end is all. The end of our obedience must not be to stop the mouth of conscience, or to gain applause and preferment; but that we may grow more like God, and bring more glory to God, *1 Cor.* x. 31. *Do all to the glory of God.* That which hath spoiled many glorious actions, and made them lose their reward, is, when men's aims have been wrong: the *Pharisees* gave alms, but

blowed a trumpet, that they might have glory of men, *Matth.* vi. 2. alms should shine, but not blaze. *Jehu* did well in destroying the *Baal*-worshippers, and God commended him for it; but, because his alms were not good, (he aimed at settling himself in the kingdom) therefore God looked upon it as no better than murder, *Hos.* i. 4. *I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.* O let us look to our ends in obedience; it is possible the action may be right, and not the heart, *2 Chron.* xxv. 6. *Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.* Two things are chiefly to be eyed in obedience, the principle, and the end: a child of God, though he shoots short in his obedience, yet he takes a right aim.

5. Obedience must be in and thorow Christ, *Eph.* i. 6. *He hath accepted us in the beloved.* Not our obedience, but Christ's merits, procure acceptance; we must, in every part of worship, tender up Christ to God in the arms of our faith: unless we serve God thus, in hope and confidence of Christ's merits, we do rather provoke God, than please him. As, when king *Uzziah* would offer incense without a priest, God was angry with him, and struck him with leprosy, *2 Chron.* xxvi. 16. so when we do not come to God in and thorow Christ, we offer up incense to God without a priest; and what can we expect but severe rebukes?

6. Obedience must be constant, *Pf.* cvi. 3. *Blessed is he who doth righteousness at all times.* True obedience is not like an high colour in a fit, but it is a right sanguine: it is like the fire on the altar, which was always kept burning, *Lev.* vi. 13. Hypocrites obedience is but for a season; it is like plaistering work, which is soon washed off: but true obedience is constant; tho' we meet with affliction, we must go on in our obedience, *Job* xvii. 9. *The righteous shall hold on his way.* We have vowed constancy; we have vowed to renounce the pomp and vanities of the world, and to fight under Christ's banner to the death. When a servant hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are sealed, then he cannot go back, he must serve out his time: there are indentures drawn in baptism, and in the Lord's supper the indentures are renewed and sealed on our part, that we will be faithful and constant in our obedience; therefore we must imitate Christ, who became obedient to the death, *Phil.* ii. 8. The crown is set upon the

the head of perseverance, *Rev. ii. 26. He that keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give the morning-star.*

*Use 1.* This indicts such who live in a contradiction to this text; they have cast off the yoke of obedience, *Jer. xlv. 16. As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.* God bids men pray in their family, they live in the total neglect of it: he bids them sanctify the sabbath, they follow their pleasures on that day: God bids them abstain from the appearance of sin, they do not abstain from the act; they live in the act of revenge, in the act of uncleanness. This is an high contempt of God; 'tis rebellion, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

*Qu. Whence is it that men do not obey God? They know their duty, yet do it not?*

*Ans. 1.* The not obeying of God is for want of faith, *Isa. liii. 1. Quis credidit? Who hath believed our report?* Did men believe sin were so bitter, that hell followed at the heels of it, would they go on in sin? Did they believe there were such a reward for the righteous, that godliness were gain, would they not pursue it? but they are atheists, not fully captivated into the belief of these things; hence it is they obey not. This is Satan's master-piece, his draw-net by which he drags millions to hell, by keeping them in infidelity; he knows, if he can but keep them from believing the truth, he is sure to keep them from obeying it.

*2.* The not obeying God is for want of self-denial. God commands one thing, and men's lusts command another; and they will rather die than deny their lusts: now, if lust cannot be denied, God cannot be obeyed.

*Use 2.* Obey God's voice. This is the beauty of a Christian.

*Qu. What are the great arguments or incentives to obedience?*

*Ans. 1.* Obedience makes us precious to God; we shall be his favourites, *Exod. xix. 5. If ye will obey my voice, ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: you shall be my portion, my jewels, the apple of mine eye, I will give a kingdom for your ransom, Isa. xliii. 3.*

*2.* There is nothing lost by obedience. To obey God's will is the way to have our will. (1.) Would we have a blessing in our estates, let us obey, *Deut. xxviii. 1. 3. If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord, to do all his*

*commandments, blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.* To obey, is the best way to thrive in our estates. (2.) Would we have a blessing in our souls, let us obey, *Jer. vii. 23. Obey, and I will be your God.* My spirit shall be your guide, sanctifier, and comforter, *Heb. v. 9. Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* While we please God, we please ourselves; while we give him the duty, he gives us the dowry. We are apt to say, as *Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 9. What shall we do for the hundred talents?* You see you lose nothing by obeying; the obedient son hath the inheritance settled on him. Obey, and you shall have a kingdom, *Luke xii. 32. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.*

*3.* What a sin disobedience is; 1st, It is an irrational sin. (1.) We are not able to stand it out in defiance against God, *1 Cor. x. 22. Are we stronger than he?* will the sinner go to measure arms with God? He is the Father Almighty, who can command legions: if we have no strength to resist him, it is irrational to disobey him. (2.) It is irrational; as it is against all law and equity: we have our daily subsistence from God; in him we live and move: is it not equal, that as we live by him, we should live to him? that as God gives us our allowance, so we should give him our allegiance?

2ly, It is a destructive sin, *1 Thess. vii. 8. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the gospel.* He who refuseth to obey God's will in commanding, shall be sure to obey his will in punishing. The sinner, while he thinks to slip the knot of obedience, twists the cord of his own damnation; he perisheth without excuse; he hath no plea or apology to make for himself, *Luke xii. 47. The servant which knew his lord's will, but did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.* God will say, why did ye not obey? you knew how to do good, but did it not; therefore your blood is upon your own head.

*Qu. What means shall we use that we may obey?*

*Ans. 1.* Serious consideration. Consider, God's commands are not grievous: he commands nothing unreasonable, *1 John v. 3.* It is easier to obey the commands of God than sin: the commands of sin are burthenesome; let a man be under the power of any lust, how doth



doth he fire himself? what hazards doth he run, even to the endangering his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lusts? what tedious journeys did *Antiochus Epiphanes* take in persecuting the Jews? *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity*; and are not God's commands more easy to obey? *Chrysostom* saith, virtue is easier than vice; temperance is less burdensome than drunkenness. Some have gone with less pains to heaven, than others have to hell.

*Consideration 2.* God commands nothing but what is beneficial, *Deut. x. 12, 13. O Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to keep his statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good?* To obey God, is not so much our duty as our privilege: his commands carry meat in the mouth of them. He bids us repent; and why?

that our sins may be blotted out, *Acts iii. 19.* He commands us to believe; and why? that we may be saved, *Acts xvi. 31.* There is love in every command: as if a king should bid one of his subjects dig in a gold-mine, then take the gold to himself.

2. *Earnest supplication.* Implore the help of the spirit to carry us on in obedience: God's spirit makes obedience easy and delightful. If the load-stone draw the iron, now it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's spirit quicken and draw the heart, now it is not hard to obey. When a gale of the spirit blows, now we go full sail in obedience. Turn that promise into a prayer, *xxxvi. 27. I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.* The promise encourageth us, the spirit enables us to obedience.



## OF LOVE.

THE rule of obedience being the moral law, comprehended in the Ten Commandments, the next question is,

*Qu. What is the sum of the Ten commandments?*

*Ans.* The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

*Deut. vi. 5. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* The duty called for is love, yea, the strength of love, *with all thine heart*: God will lose none of our love. Love is the soul of religion, and that which goes to the right constituting a Christian: love is the queen of the graces; it shines and sparkles in God's eye, as the precious stones did on the breast-plate of *Aaron*.

*Qu. 1. What is love?*

*Ans.* It is an holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a Christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme Good.

*Qu. 2. What is the antecedent of love to God?*

*Ans.* The antecedent of love is knowledge: the Spirit shines upon the understanding, and

discovers these orient beauties in God, his wisdom, holiness, mercy; and these are the *lencinium*, the load-stone to entice and draw the love to God. *Ignoti nulla cupido*; such as know not God cannot love him; if the sun be set in the understanding, there must needs be night in the affections.

*Qu. 3. Wherein doth the formal nature of love consist?*

*Ans.* The nature of love is in delighting in the object: *Complacentia amantis in amato*, *Aquin.* This is our loving God, our taking delight in him, *Pf. xxxvii. 4. Delight thyself in the Lord*; as a bride delights herself in her jewels. Grace changeth a Christian's aims and delights.

*Qu. 4. How must our love to God be qualified?*

*Ans. 1.* If it be a sincere love, we must love God with all our heart: in the text, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God* [*Heb. Bēcol leuauca*] *with all thy heart.* God will have the whole heart; we must not divide our love between God and sin; the true mother would not have the child divided, nor will God have the heart divided; it must be the whole heart.

2. We must love God *propter se*, for himself, for his own intrinsic excellencies: we must love

love him for his loveliness : *Meretricius est amor plus annulum quam sponsum amare* ; “ It is an harlot’s love, to love the portion more than the person.” Hypocrites love God because he gives them corn and wine : we must love God for himself ; for those shining perfections which are in him. Gold is loved for itself.

3. We must love God with all our *might* ; in the *Hebrew* text, our *vehemency* ; we must love God, *quoad posse*, as much as we are able. Christians should be like Seraphims burning in holy love : we can never love God so much as he deserves ; the angels in heaven cannot love God so much as he deserves.

4. Love to God must be active in its sphere : love is an industrious affection, it sets the head a-studying for God, hands a-working, feet a-running in the ways of his commandments ; it is called the labour of love, *1 Thess. i. 3.* *Mary Magdalene* loved Christ, and poured her ointments on him. We think we can never do enough for the person whom we love.

5. Love to God must be superlative. God is the quintessence of beauty, a whole paradise of delight ; and he must have a priority in our love. Our love to God must be above all things besides, as the oil swims above the water : we must love God above estate, relations. Great is the love to relations : there is a story in the *French academy*, of a daughter, who, when her father was condemned to die by famine, gave him suck with her own breasts. But our love to God must be above father and mother, *Matth. x. 37.* We may give the creature the milk of our love, God must have the cream ; the spouse keeps the juice of her pomegranates for Christ, *Cant. viii. 2.*

6. Our love to God must be constant, like the fire the Vestal virgins kept in *Rome*, which did not go out : love must be like the motion of the pulse, it beats as long as there is life, *Cant. viii. 7.* *Many waters cannot quench love*, not the waters of persecution, *Eph. iii. 17.* *Rooted in love.* A branch withers, that doth not grow on a root : that love may not die, it must be well rooted.

Qu. 5. *What are the visible signs of our love to God ?*

Ans. 1. If we love God, then our desire is after him, *Isa. xxvi. 8.* *The desire of our soul is to thy name.* He who loves God, breathes after communion with him, *Pf. xlii. 2.* *My soul thirsts for the living God.* Persons in love de-

sire to be oft conferring together ; he who loves God, desires to be much in his presence : he loves the ordinances, they are the glass where the glory of God is resplendent ; in the ordinances we meet with him whom our soul loves, we have God’s smiles and whispers, and some foretastes of heaven. Such as have no desire after ordinances, have no love to God.

2. The second visible sign : he who loves God, cannot take contentment in any thing without him. An hypocrite who pretends to love God, give him but corn and wine, and he can be content without God : but a soul fired with love to God, cannot be without him ; lovers faint away, if they have not a sight of the object loved. A gracious soul can want health, but not want God, who is the health of his countenance, *Pf. xliii. 5.* If God should say to a soul that entirely loves him, take thy ease, swim in pleasure, solace thyself in the delights of the world, but thou shalt not enjoy my presence ; this would not content the soul. Nay, if God should say, I will let thee be taken up to heaven, but I will retire into a withdrawing-room, and thou shalt not see my face ; this would not content the soul, it is an hell to want God. The philosopher saith, there can be no gold without the influence of the sun ; there can be no golden joy in the soul, without God’s sweet presence and influence.

3. The third visible sign : he who loves God, hates that which would separate between him and God, and that is sin. Sin makes God hide his face ; it is like an incendiary, which parts chief friends ; therefore the keenness of a Christian’s hatred is set against sin, *Pf. cxix. 128.* *I hate every false way.* Antipathies can never be reconciled : one cannot love health, but he must hate poison ; so we cannot love God, but we must hate sin, which would destroy our communion with him.

4. The fourth visible sign is sympathy : friends that love, do grieve for the evils which befall each other. *Homer* describing *Agamemnon’s* grief, when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter, brings in all his friends weeping with him, and accompanying him to the sacrifice in mourning : lovers grieve together ; if we have true love in our heart to God, we cannot but grieve for those things which grieve him : we shall lay to heart his dishonours ; the luxury, drunkenness, contempt of God and religion, *Pf. cxix. 136.* *Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, &c.* Some speak of the sins of others, and



and make a laughing at them; sure they have no love to God, who can laugh at that which grieves his spirit. Doth he love his father, who can laugh to hear him reproached?

5. The fifth visible sign: he who loves God, labours to render him lovely to others; he not only admires God, but speaks in his praises, that he may allure and draw others to be in love with God. She that is in love will commend her lover: the love-sick spouse extols Christ, she makes a panegyric oration of his worth, that she might persuade others to be in love with him, *Cant. v. 11. His head is as the most fine gold.* True love to God cannot be silent, it will be elegant in setting forth God's renown: no better sign of loving God, than by making him appear lovely, and so drawing profelytes to him.

The sixth visible sign: he who loves God, weeps bitterly for his absence. *Mary* comes weeping, *They have taken away my Lord*, *John xx. 2.* One cries, my health is gone; another, my estate is gone; but he who is a lover of God, cries out, my God is gone, I cannot enjoy him whom I love. What can all worldly comforts do, when once God is absent? It is like a funeral banquet, where there is much meat, but no cheer, *Job xxx. 28. I went mourning without the sun.* If *Rachel* mourned so for the loss of her children, what vail or pencil can shadow out the sorrow of that Christian who hath lost God's sweet presence? Such a soul pours forth floods of tears, and, while it is lamenting, seems to say thus to God, Lord, thou art in heaven, hearing the melodious songs and triumphs of angels; but I sit here in the valley of tears, weeping because thou art gone. O when wilt thou come to me, and revive me with the light of thy countenance? Or, Lord, if thou wilt not come to me, let me come to thee, where I shall have a perpetual smile of thy face in heaven, and shall never more complain, *My beloved hath withdrawn himself.*

7. The seventh visible sign: he who loves God, is willing to do and suffer for him. He subscribes to God's commands; he submits to his will. *First*, He subscribes to God's commands: if God bids him mortify sin, love his enemies, be crucified to the world; he obeys. 'Tis a vain thing for a man to say he loves God, and slight his commands. *Secondly*, He submits to God's will: if God will have him suffer for him, he doth not dispute, but obey, *1 Cor. xiii. 7. Love endureth all things.* Love

made Christ suffer for us, and love will make us suffer for him. It is true, every Christian is not a martyr, but he hath a spirit of martyrdom in him; he hath a disposition of mind to suffer, if God call him to it, *2 Tim. iv. 6. I am ready to be offered up*: not only the sufferings were ready for *Paul*, but he was ready for the sufferings. *Origen* choosed rather to live despised in *Alexandria*, than with *Plotinus* to deny the faith, and be great in the prince's favour, *Rev. xii. 11.* Many say they love God, but will not suffer the loss of any thing for him. If Christ should have said to us, I love you well, you are dear to me, but I cannot suffer for you, I cannot lay down my life for you; we should have questioned his love very much: and may not the Lord question ours, when we pretend love to him, but will endure nothing for his sake?

*Use 1.* What shall we say to them who have not a drachm of love in their hearts to God? they have their life from him, yet do not love him. God spreads their table every day, yet do not love him: sinners dread God as a judge, but do not love him as a father. All the strength in the angels cannot make the heart love God; judgments will not do it; only omnipotent grace can make a stony heart melt in love. How sad is it to be void of love to God? when the body is cold, and hath no heat in it, it's a sign of death; he is spiritually dead, who hath no heat of love in his heart to God. Shall ever such live with God, that doth not love him? will God lay an enemy in his bosom? Such as will not be drawn with cords of love, shall be bound in chains of darkness.

*Use 2.* Let us be persuaded to love God with all our heart and might: O let us take our love off from other things, and place it upon God. Love is the heart of religion, the fat of the offering: 'Tis the grace which Christ enquires most after, *John xxi. 15. Peter, lovest thou me?* Love makes all our services acceptable, it is the musk that perfumes them. It is not so much duty, as love to duty, God delights in; therefore serving and loving God are put together, *Isa. lvi. 6.* 'Tis better to love him, than to serve him; obedience without love, is like wine without the spirit. O then, be persuaded to love God with all your heart and might. To persuade to this virgin-affection of love.

1. 'Tis nothing but your love God desires. The Lord might have demanded your children to be offered in sacrifice; he might have bid you cut and launce yourselves, or lain in hell a while

a while ; but he only desires your love, he would only have this flower. Is this an hard request, to love God ? was ever any debt easier paid than this ? is it any labour for the wife to love her husband ? Love is delightful. *Non potest amor esse, & dulcis non esse*, Bern.

What is there in our love, that God should desire it ? Why should a king desire the love of a woman that is in debt, and diseased ? God doth not want our love. There are angels enough in heaven to adore and love him. What is God the better for our love ? It adds not the least cubic to his essential blessedness. God doth not need our love, yet seeks it. Why doth God desire us to give him our heart ? *Prov. xxiii. 26.* Not that he needs our heart, but that he may make it better.

2. Great will be our advantage, if we love God. God doth not court our love, that we should lose it, *1 Cor. ii. 9.* *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* If you will love God, you shall have such a reward as exceeds your faith. God will betrothe you to himself in the dearest love, *Hos. ii. 19.* *I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in loving kindness and mercies.* *Zeph. i. 17.* *The Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love.* If you love God, he will interest you in all his riches and dignities, he will give you honour and wealth for your dowry, he will set a crown on your head. *Vespasian* the emperor gave a crown and a third to a woman who came to him, and praised that she loved him ; God gives a crown of life to them that love him, *James i. 12.*

3. Love is the only grace that shall live with us in heaven. In heaven we shall need no repentance, because we have no sin ; no faith, because we see God face to face : but love to God shall abide for ever. *Love never faileth*, *1 Cor. xiii. 8.* How should we nourish this grace, which shall outlive all the graces, and run parallel with eternity !

4. Our love to God is a sign of his love to us, *1 John iv. 19.* *We love him, because he first loved us.* By nature we have no love to God : we have hearts of stone, *Ezek. xxxvi. 1.* And how can any love be in hearts of stone ? Our loving is from his loving us. If the glass burn, it is because the sun hath shined on it, else it could not burn : if our hearts burn in love, it is a sign the sun of righteousness hath shined upon us.

Qu. *How shall we do, to love God aright ?*

Ans. 1. Wait on the preaching of the word. As faith comes by hearing, so doth love : the word sets forth God in his incomparable excellencies ; it doth decypher and pencil him out in all his glory, and a sight of his beauty inflames love.

2. Beg of God, that he will give you a heart to love him. When king *Solomon* asked wisdom of God, the speech pleased the Lord, *1 Kings iii. 10.* So, when thou criest to God, *Lord, give me an heart to love thee, 'tis my grief I can love thee no more ;* sure this prayer pleaseth the Lord, and he will pour out his spirit upon thee, whose golden oil will make the lamp of thy love burn bright.

3. You who have love to God, keep it flaming upon the altar of your heart. Love, as fire, will be ready to go out, *Rev. ii. 4.* *Thou hast left thy first love.* Through neglect of duty, or too much love of the world, our love to God will cool. O preserve your love to God : as you would be careful to preserve the natural heat in your body, so be careful to preserve the heat of love to God. Love is like oil to the wheels, it quickens us in God's service. When you find your love abate and cool, use all means for quickning : when the fire is going out, you throw on fuel : when the flame of love is going out, make use of the ordinances as sacred fuel to keep the fire of your love burning.

## OF THE PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Exod. xx. 1, 2. *And God spake all these Words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, &c.*

Q. XXV. *WHAT is the preface to the Ten Commandments ?*

Ans. The preface to the Ten Commandments is, I AM THE LORD THY GOD.

B b

WHERE



WHERE observe, 1. The preface to the preface, *God spake all these words, saying.* 2. The preface itself to the commandments, *I am the Lord thy God.*

I begin with the first, the preface to the preface, *God spake all these words, saying, &c.* This is like the sounding of a trumpet before a solemn proclamation, [*God spake*] other parts of the Bible are said to be uttered by the mouth of the holy prophets, *Luke i. 70.* but here God spake in his own person.

Qu. *How may we understand this, [God spake] he hath no bodily parts or organs of speech?*

Ans. God made some intelligible sound, or formed a voice in the air, which was to the Jews as God's very speaking to them. In the text, 1. The lawgiver, God, [*God spake.*] 2. The law itself, [*all these words.*]

1. The lawgiver, [*God spake.*] There are two things requisite in a lawgiver. *First*, wisdom. Laws are founded upon reason; and he must be wise that makes laws. God, in this respect, is most fit to be a lawgiver; he is *wise in heart*, *Job. ix. 4.* he hath a monopoly of wisdom, *1 Tim. i. 17. The only wise God.* Therefore he is the fittest to enact and constitute laws. *Secondly*, The second thing requisite in a law-giver is, authority. If a subject make laws, though never so wise, yet they want the stamp of authority. God hath the supreme power in his hand; he derives a being to all; and he who gives men their lives, hath most right to give them their laws.

2. The law itself [*all these words;*] that is, all the words of the moral law, which is usually stiled the decalogue or ten commandments. It is called the moral law, because it is the rule of life and manners. *St. Chrysostom* compares the scripture to a garden, the moral law is a chief flower in it; the scripture is a banquet, the moral law the chief dish in it.

(1.) The moral law is perfect, *Pf. xix. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect.* It is an exact model and platform of religion; it is the standard of truth, the judge of controversies, the polestar to direct us to heaven, *Prov. vi. 23. The commandment is a lamp.* Though the moral law be not a Christ to justify us, yet it is a rule to instruct us.

(2) The moral law is unalterable; it remains still in force. Though the ceremonial and judicial laws are abrogated, yet the moral law delivered by God's own mouth is to be of perpetual use in the church. Therefore the law

was written in tables of stone, to shew the perpetuity of it.

(3.) The moral law is very illustrious and full of glory. God did put glory upon it, in the manner of the promulgation of it. 1. The people, before the moral law was delivered, were to wash their clothes, *Exod. xix. 10.* Whereby, as by a type, God required the sanctifying of their ears and hearts to receive the law. 2. There were bonds set, that none might touch the mount, *Exod. xix. 12.* which was to breed in the people reverence to the law. 3. God wrote the law with his own finger, *Exod. xxxi. 18.* which was such an honour put upon the moral law, as we read of no other writing. God did by some mighty operation make the law legible in letters, as if it had been written with his own finger. 4. God's putting the law in the ark to be kept, was another signal mark of honour put upon it. The ark was the cabinet in which God put the ten commandments, as ten jewels. 5. At the delivery of the moral law, there was the attendance of many angels, *Deut. xxxii.* Here was a parliament of angels called, and God himself was the speaker.

Use. 1. Here we may take notice of God's goodness, who hath not left us without law: therefore the Lord doth often set it down as a demonstration of his love, in giving his commandments, *Pf. cxlvii. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them.* *Neb. ix. 13. Thou gavest them true laws, good statutes and commandments.* What a strange creature would man be, if he had no law to direct him? There would be no living in the world; we should have none born but *Ishmaels*, every man's hand would be against his neighbour. Man would grow wild, if he had not affliction to tame him, and the moral law to guide him. The law of God is an hedge to keep us within the bounds of sobriety and piety.

Use 2. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then it condemns, 1<sup>st</sup>, The *Marcionites*, and *Manichees*, who speak slightly, yea, blasphemously of the moral law: they say, it is below a Christian, it is carnal; which the apostle confutes, when he saith, *The law is spiritual, but I am carnal*, *Rom. vii. 14.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, The *Antinomians*, who will not admit the moral law to be a rule to a believer. We say not he is under the curse of the law, but the commands; we say not the moral law is a Christ, but it is a star to lead one to Christ; we say not it doth save,

save, but it doth sanctify. They who cast God's law behind their backs; God will cast their prayers behind his back; they who will not have the law to rule them, shall have the law to judge them. 3dly, The papists, who (as if God's law were imperfect, and when he spake all these words, he did not speak enough) add their canons and traditions to the moral law. This is to tax God's wisdom, as if he knew not how to make his own law. And surely it is an high provoking sin, *Rev. xxii. 18. If any man shall add to these words, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book.* As it is a great evil to add any thing to a man's sealed will, so much more to add any thing to that law God himself spake, and wrote with his own fingers.

Use 3. If God spake all these words, viz. of the moral law, then this presseth upon us several duties: 1. If God spake all these words, then we must hear all these words; the words which God speak are too precious to be lost. As we would have God hear all our words when we pray, so we must hear all his words when he speaks. We must not be as the deafadder, which stoppeth her ears: he that stops his ears when God cries, shall cry himself, and not be heard.

2. If God spake all these words, then we must attend to them with reverence. Every word of the moral law is an oracle from heaven; God himself is the preacher; this calls for reverence. If a judge gives a charge upon the bench, all attend with reverence. In the moral law God himself gives a charge, *God spake all these words*: Therefore, with what veneration should we attend? *Moses* was to put off his shoes from his feet, in token of reverence, when God was about to speak to him, *Exod. iii. 5, 6.*

3. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then we must remember them. Sure all God speaks is worth remembering; those words are weighty which concern salvation, *Deut. xxxii. 47. It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.* Our memory should be like the chest in the ark, where the law was kept: God's oracles are ornaments, and shall we forget them? *Jer. ii. 32. Can a maid forget her ornament?*

4. If God spake all these words, then believe them. See the name of God written upon every commandment. The heathens, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at *Rome*. The moral law fetcheth its pedigree from heaven: *ipse dixit*, God spake all these words. Shall we not give credit to the God of heaven? How would the

angel confirm the women in the resurrection of Christ, *Mat. xxiii. 7. Lo, (saith he) I have told you*; I speak in the word of an angel. Much more should the moral law be believed, when it comes to us in the word of a God. *God spake all these words.* Unbelief enervates the virtue of God's word, and makes it prove abortive, *Heb. iv. 2. The word did not profit, not being mixed with faith.* Eve gave more credit to the devil when he spake, than she did to God.

5. If God spake all these words, then love the commandments, *Pf. cxix. 97. O how love I thy law? It is my meditation all the day. Consider how I love thy precepts*, *Pf. cxix. 159.* The moral law is the copy of God's will, our spiritual directory, it shews us what sins to avoid, what duties to pursue: the ten commandments are a chain of pearl to adorn us, they are our treasury to enrich us; they are more precious than lands of spices, or rocks of diamonds, *Pf. cxix. 72. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.* The law of God hath truth and goodness in it, *Neh. ix. 13.* Truth, for God spake it; and goodness, for there is nothing the commandment enjoins, but is for our good: O then let this command our love.

6. If God spake all these words, then teach your children the law of God, *Deut. vi. 7. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.* He who is godly, is both a diamond and a loadstone; a diamond, for the sparkling of his grace; and a loadstone, for his attractive virtue in drawing others to the love of God's precepts: *vir bonus magis aliis predest quam sibi.* You that are parents, discharge your duty: though you cannot impart grace to your children, yet you may impart knowledge. Let your children know the commandments of God, *Deut. xi. 19. Ye shall teach them your children.* You are careful to leave your children a portion; leave the oracles of heaven with them; instruct them in the law of God: if God spake all these words, you may well speak them over again to your children.

7. If God spake all these words, then the moral law must be obeyed: if a king speaks, his word commands allegiance: much more, when God speaks, all his words must be subscribed to. Some will obey partially, obey some commandments, not others; like a plough, which when it comes to a stiff piece of earth, makes a baulk: but God that spake all the words



of the moral law, will have all obeyed; God will not dispense with the breach of one law. Indeed princes, for special reasons, dispense sometimes with penal statutes, and will not take the severity of the law: but God, who spake all these words, binds men with a *subpoena* to yield obedience to every law. This condemns the church of *Rome*, who instead of obeying the whole moral law, blot out one commandment, and dispense with others.

1. They leave out the second commandment out of their catechises, because it makes against images; and to fill up the number of ten, they divide the tenth commandment into two. Thus they run themselves into that dreadful premature, *Rev. xxii. 16. If any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.*

2. As they blot out one commandment, and cut that knot which they cannot untie; so they dispense with other commandments: they dispense with the sixth commandment, making murder meritorious, in case of propagating the catholic cause: they dispense with the seventh commandment, wherein God forbids adultery; the Pope dispenseth with the sin of uncleanness, yea incest, only paying such fines and sums of money into his coffer. No wonder the pope takes men off from their loyalty to kings and princes, when he teacheth them disloyalty to God. Some of the papists say expressly in their

writings, that the Pope hath power to dispense with the laws of God, and can give men a licence to break the commandments of the old and new testament. That such a religion ever get foot in *England*, the Lord in mercy prevent. If God spake all the commandments, then we must obey all: he who breaks this hedge of the commandments, a serpent shall bite him.

Object. *But what man alive can obey all God's commandments?*

Ans. To obey the law in a legal sense, viz. to do all the law requires, no man alive can; sin hath cut the lock of original righteousness, where our strength lay: but, in a true gospel-sense, we may so obey the moral law, as to find acceptance. Which gospel-obedience consists in a real endeavour to observe the whole moral law, *Pf. cxix. 166. I have done thy commandments*; Nor, I have done all I should do, but I have done all I am able to do; and wherein our obedience comes short, we look up to the perfect righteousness and obedience of Christ, and hope for pardon through his blood: this is evangelically to obey the moral law; which, though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance. Thus I have done with the first, the preface to the preface, *God spake all these words*: I should now come to the second, the preface itself to the commandments, *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*

Exod. xx. *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*

**II.** THE preface itself, which consists of three parts: 1. *I am the Lord thy God*: 2. *Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt*: 3. *Out of the house of bondage.*

First, *I am the Lord thy God.* Where we have a description of God; 1. By his essential greatness, *I am the Lord*; 2. By his relative goodness, *thy God*. 1st, By his essential greatness, *I am the Lord*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *JEHOVAH*. This name of God sets forth his majesty. *Sanctius habitum fuit*, saith Buxtorf. The name of *Jehovah* was had in more reverence among the Jews, than any other name of God; it signifies God's self-sufficiency, eternity, independency, immutability, *Mal. iii. 6.*

Use 1. If God be *Jehovah*, the fountain of being, who can do what he will; let us fear this great Lord, *Deut. xxviii. 58. That thou*

*mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, Jehovah.*

Use 2. If God be *Jehovah*, the supreme Lord; then it condemns the blasphemous papists, who speak after this manner, *Our Lord God the Pope*. Is it a wonder the pope sits his triple crown above the heads of kings and emperors, when he usurps God's title, *assuming himself that he is God*? 2 *Thess. ii. 4*. The pope goes to make himself Lord of heaven, for he will canonize saints there; Lord of earth, for with his keys he doth bind and loose whom he pleaseth; Lord of hell, for he can free men out of purgatory: but God will pull down these plumes of pride; he will consume *this man of sin with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming*, 2 *Thess. ii. 8.*

2dly, God is described by his relative goodness,

ness, *thy God*: had God only called himself *Jehovah*, it might have terrified us, and made us fly from him; but when he saith, *thy God*, this may allure and draw us to him: this, though a preface to the law, is pure gospel. This word *Eloeka, thy God*, is so sweet, that we can never suck out all the hony in it. *I am thy God*, not only by creation, but by election. This word, *thy God*, though it was spoken to *Israel*, yet it is a charter belongs to all the saints. For the further explication, here are three questions.

Qu. 1. *How God comes to be our God?*

Ans. Through Jesus Christ. Christ is a middle person in the unity: he is *Emanuel, God with us*: he brings two different parties together; he makes our nature lovely to God, and God's nature lovely to us: he, by his dearth, causeth friendship, yea, union: he brings us within the verge of the covenant, and so God becomes our God.

Qu. 2. *What doth this imply God being our God?*

Ans. It is comprehensive of all good things: God is our strong tower; our fountain of living water: our salvation. More particularly, God being our God implies the sweetest relation.

1. The relation of a father, 2 Cor. vi. 18. *I will be a father unto you*: a father is full of tender care for his child: whom doth he settle the inheritance upon, but his child? God being our God, will be a father to us; a father of mercy, 1 Cor. i. 3. *The everlasting Father*, Isa. ix. 7. If God be our God, we have a father in heaven that never dies.

2. It imports the relation of a husband, *Isa. liv. 5. Thy maker is thy husband*. If God be our husband, he steers us precious to him, as the apple of his eye *Zech. ii. 8*. He imparts his secrets to us, *Psal. xv. 18*. He bestows a kingdom upon us for ever dowry, *Luke xii. 32*.

Qu. 3. *How may we come to know this covenant-union, that is ours?*

Ans. 1. By having his graces planted in us. King's children are adorned with costly jewels: It is not having common gifts, which shews we belong to God; many have the gifts of God without God; but it is grace gives us a true genuine title to God. In particular, faith is *vinculum unitis*, the grace of union: by this we may spend out our interest in God. Faith doth not, as the mariner, cast its anchor downwards, but upwards; it trusts in the mercy and blood of God, and, trusting in God, engageth him to be our God: other graces make us like God, faith makes us one with him.

2. We may know God is our God, by having the earnest of his spirit in our hearts, 2 Cor. i. 22. God often gives the purse to the wicked, but the spirit only to such as he intends to make his heirs. (1.) Have we had the consecration of the spirit? If we have not had the sealing work of the spirit. Have we had the healing work? 1 John ii. 20. *Ye have an unction from the holy One*. The spirit, where it is, stamps the impress of its own holiness upon the heart: it embroiders and bejewels the soul, and makes it all glorious within. (2.) Have we had the attraction of the spirit? *1 Cor. ii. 4. Draw me, we will run after thee*. Hath the spirit, by its magnetic virtue, drawn our hearts to God? Can we say, as *Sant. i. 7. I have drawn my soul loveth*? Is God our dear life of life? Our *Siguliah*, or chief treasure? Are our hearts so chained to God, that no other object can enchant us, or draw us away from him? (3.) Have we had the elevation of the spirit? Hath it raised our hearts above the world? *Ezek. iii. 14. The spirit lifted me up*. Hath the spirit made us *suprema anhelare*, seek the things above where Christ is? Though our flesh is on earth, is our heart in heaven? though we live here, trade we above? Hath the spirit thus lifted us up? By this we may come to know, that God is our God: where God gives his spirit for an earnest, there he gives himself for a portion.

3. We may know God is our God, if he hath given us the hearts of Children. Have we obediential hearts? *Psal. xxvii. 8. Do we subscribe to God's commands, when his commands cross our will? A true saint is like the flower of the sun, it opens and shuts with the sun: he opens to God, and shuts to sin. If we have the hearts of children, then God is our father.*

4. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by our standing up for his interest. We will appear in his cause, and vindicate his truth, wherein his glory is so much concerned. *Athanasius* was the bulwark of orthodoxy; he stood up for it, when most of the world were *Arians*. In former times the nobles of *Scythia*, when the gospel was read, did lay their hands upon their swords, signifying that they were ready to defend the faith, and hazard their lives for the gospel: no better sign of our having an interest in God, than by our standing up for his interest.

3. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by his having an interest in us, *Cant. ii. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his.*



his. When God saith to the soul, *Thou art mine*; the soul answers, *Lord, I am thine*: all I have is at thy service; my head shall be thine, to study for thee; my tongue shall be thine, to praise thee. If God be our God by way of donation, we are his by way of dedication: we live to him, and are more his than we are our own. And thus we may come to know that God is our God.

*Use 1.* Above all things let us get this great charter confirmed, That God is our God: Deity is not comfortable without propriety. *Tolle meum, & tolle Deum*, Aug. O let us labour to get sound evidences, that God is our God: we cannot call health, liberty, estate, ours; O let us be able to call God ours, and say as the church, *Psal. lxxvii. 6. God, even our God shall bless us*. Let every soul here labour to pronounce this *Shibboleth, My God*. And that we may endeavour after this to have God for our God; consider, (1.) The misery of such as have not God for their God: in how sad a condition are they, when an hour of distress comes? this was *Saul's* case, *1 Sam. xxviii. 13. I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed from me*. A wicked man, in time of trouble, is like a vessel tossed on the sea without an anchor, it falls on rocks or sands: a sinner, not having God to be his God, tho' he makes a shift while health and estate last, yet, when these crutches are broken he leaned upon, his heart sinks. It is with a wicked man, as it was with the old world, when the flood came; the waters at first came to the valleys, but then the people would get to the hills and mountains, but when the waters came to the mountains, then there might be some trees on the high hills, and they would climb up to them: ay, but then the waters did rise up to the tops of the trees: now all hopes of being saved were gone, their hearts failed them. So it is with a man that hath not God to be his God: if one comfort be taken away, he hath another: if he lose a child, he hath an estate: ay, but when the waters rise higher, death comes and takes away all; now he hath nothing to help himself with, *no God to go to*, he must needs die despairing. (2.) How great a privilege it is to have God for our God? *Pf. cxliv. 15. Happy are the people whose God is the Lord. Beatitudo hominis est Deus*, Aug. That you may see the privilege of this charter;

1. If God be our God, then, tho' we may feel the stroke of evil, yet not the sting. He must needs be happy, who is in such a condi-

tion, that nothing can hurt him: if he lose his name, it is written in the book of life; if he lose his liberty, his conscience is free; if he lose his estate; he is possessed of the pearl of price; if he meets with storms, he knows where to put in for harbour; God is his God, and heaven is his haven.

2. If God be our God, then our soul is safe. The soul is the jewel, it is a blossom of eternity, *Dan. vii. 15. I was grieved in the midst of my body*; in the *Chaldee* it is, in the midst of my sheath. The body is but the sheath; the soul is the princely part of man, which sways the sceptre of reason; it is a celestial spark, as *Damascene* calls it. If God be our God, the soul is safe, as in a garrison; death can do no more hurt to a virtuous heaven-born soul, than *David* did to *Saul*, when he cut off the lap of his garment: the soul is safe, being hid in the promises; hid in the wounds of Christ; hid in God's decree. The soul is the pearl, and heaven is the cabinet where God will lock it up safe.

3. If God be our God, then all that is in God is ours: the Lord saith to a saint in covenant, as the king of *Israel* to the king of *Syria*, *1 Kings xx. 4. I am thine, and all that I have*. So saith God, *I am thine*: how happy is he who not only inherits the gifts of God, but inherits God himself? All that I have shall be thine; my wisdom shall be thine, to teach thee; my power shall be thine, to support thee; my mercy shall be thine, to save thee. God is an infinite ocean of blessedness, and there is enough in him to fill us: if a thousand vessels be thrown into the sea, there is enough in the sea to fill them.

4. If God be our God, he will intirely love us: propriety is the ground of love. God may give men kingdoms, and not love them; but he cannot be our God, and not love us: he calls his covenanted saints, *Jediduth, Naphshi, The dearly beloved of his soul*, *Jer. xii. 7*. He rejoiceth over them with joy, and rests in his love, *Zeph. iii. 17*. They are his refined silver, *Zech. xiii. 9*. His jewels, *Mal. iii. 17*. His royal diadem, *Isa. lxii. 3*. He gives them the cream and flower of his love: he not only opens his hand and fills them, *Psal. cxlv. 17*. but opens his heart and fills them.

5. If God be our God, he will do more for us than all the world besides can. What is that? (1.) He will give us peace in trouble: when a storm without, he will make music within. The world can create trouble in peace, but

but God can create peace in trouble: he will send the comforter, who, as a dove, brings an olive-branch of peace in his mouth, *John* xiv. 16. (2.) God will give us a crown of immortality: the world can give a crown of gold, but that crown hath thorns in it, and death in it: but God will give a *crown of glory that fadeth not away*, 1 *Pet.* v. 4. The garland made of the flowers of paradise never withers.

6. If God be our God, he will bear with many infirmities: God may respite sinners a while, but long forbearance is no acquittance; he will throw them to hell for their sins; but if God be our God, he will not for every failing destroy us; he bears with his spouse as with the weaker vessel: God may chastise, *Psal.* lxxxix. 32. He may use the rod and the pruning-knife, but not the bloody ax, *Numb.* xxiii. 21. *He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob*: he will not see sin in his people, so as to destroy them; he sees their sins so as to pity them: he sees them, as a physician sees a disease in his patient, to heal him, *Isa.* lvii. 18. *I have seen his iniquities, and I will heal him.* Every failing doth not break the marriage-bond asunder. The disciples had great failings, they all forsook Christ, and fled; but this did not break off their interest in God: therefore, saith Christ, at his ascension, *Tell my disciples, I go to my God and to their God.*

If God be once our God, he is so for ever, *Psal.* xlviii. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever.* Whatever worldly comforts we have,

are but for a season, *Heb.* xi. 25. we must part with all. As *Paul's* friends did accompany him to the ship, and there left him, *Acts* xx. 28. so all our earthly comforts will but go with us to the grave, and there leave us. You cannot say you have health, and shall have it for ever; you have a child, and shall have it for ever: but if God be your God, you shall have him for ever; *This God is our God for ever and ever.* If God be our God, he will be a God to us as long as he is a God: *You have taken away my Gods*, saith *Micah*, *Judges* xviii. 24. But it cannot be said so to a believer, that his God is taken away; he may lose all things else, but cannot lose his God. God is ours from everlasting in election, and to everlasting in glory.

8. If God be our God, we shall enjoy all our godly relations with him in heaven. The great felicity on earth, is to enjoy relations; a father sees his own picture in a child; a wife sees a piece of herself in her husband; we plant the flower of love among our relations, and the loss of them is like the pulling of a limb from the body. But if God be ours, with enjoying God we shall enjoy all our pious relations in glory. The gracious child shall see his godly father, the virtuous wife shall see her religious husband in Christ's arms; and then there will be a dearer love to relations than ever was before, tho' in a far different manner; then relations shall meet and never part: *And so shall we be ever with the Lord.*

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EXOD. XX. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*

TO all such as can make out this covenant-union, it exhorts to several things.

I. If God be our God, let us improve our interest in him, cast all our burdens upon him; the burden of our fears, wants, sins, *Psal.* lv. 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord.* Wicked men, who are a burden to God, have no right to cast their burden upon him; but such as have God for their God, are called upon to cast their burden upon him. Where should the child ease all its cares, but in the bosom of its parent? *Judges* xix. 20. *Let all thy wants ly upon me.* So God seems to say to his children, Let all thy wants ly upon me. Christian, what doth trouble thee? thou hast a God to pardon thy sins, to supply thy wants: therefore roll your burden on the Lord, 1 *Pet.* v. 7.  *Casting*

*all your care on him.* Whence are Christians so disquieted in their minds? they are taking care, when they should be casting care.

II. If God be our God, let us learn to be contented, tho' we have the less of other things. Contentment is a rare jewel, it is the cure of care. If we have God to be our God, well may we be contented; *I know whom I have believed*, 2 *Tim.* i. 12. There was *Paul's* interest in God, 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. *As having nothing, yet possessing all*: there was his content. That such who have covenant-union with God may be filled with contentation of spirit, consider what a rich blessing God is to the soul.

1. God is *bonum sufficiens*, a sufficient good. He who hath God, hath enough. If a man be thirsty, bring him to the ocean, and he is satisfied;



fied; in God there is enough to fill the heaven-born soul: *He gives grace and glory*, Psalm lxxxiv. 11. There is in God not only a sufficiency, but a redundancy; he is not only full as a vessel, but as a spring. Other things can no more fill the soul, than a mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship: but in God is a *cornucopia*, an infinite fulness; he hath enough to fill the angels, therefore enough to fill us. The heart is a triangle, which only the Trinity can fill.

2. God is *bonum sanctificans*, a sanctifying good. 1. He sanctifies all our comforts, and turns them into blessings. Health is blessed, estate is blessed; he gives with the venison a blessing, *Psalm cxxii. 15. I will abundantly bless her provision*. He gives us that life we have, *tanquam arrhabo*, as an earnest of more. He gives the little meal in the barrel, as an earnest of the royal feast in paradise. He sanctifies all our crosses: they shall not be destructive punishments, but medicines; they shall corrode and eat out the venom of sin, they shall polish and refine our grace. The more the diamond is cut, it sparkles the more. God's stretching the strings of his viol, is to make the music better.

3. God is *bonum selectum*, a choice good. All things, *sub sole*, are but *bona scabelli*, as *Auslin*, the blessings of the footstool; but to have God himself to be ours, is the blessing of the throne. *Abraham* gave gifts to the sons of the concubines, but he settled the inheritance upon *Isaac*, Gen. xxv. 5. *Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac*. God may send away the men of the world with gifts, a little gold and silver; but, in giving us himself, he gives us the very quintessence, his grace, his love, his kingdom: here is the crowning blessing.

4. God is *bonum summum*, the chief good. In the chief good there must be, *First*, delectability, it must have something that is delicious and sweet: and where can we suck those pure quintessential comforts, which ravish us with delight, but in God? *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, imo rapitur*; *At God's right hand are pleasures*, Psalm xvi. 11. *Secondly*, In the chief good there must be transcendency, it must have a surpassing excellency. Thus God is infinitely better than all other things; it's below the Deity to compare other things with it. Who would go to weigh a feather with a mountain of gold? God is *fons & origo*, the spring of all entities, and the

cause is more noble than the effect. It is God that bespangles the creation, that puts light into the sun, that fills the veins of the earth with silver; other creatures do but maintain life, God gives life. God infinitely out-shines all sublunary glory; he is better than the soul, than angels, than heaven. *Thirdly*, In the chief good, there must be not only fulness, but variety: where variety is wanting, we are apt to nauseate; to feed only on honey, would breed loathing; but in God is all variety of fulness, *Col. i. 19*. He is an universal good, commensurate to all our wants; he is *bonum in quo omnia bona*, a son, a pardon, an horn of salvation: he is called the *God of all comfort*, 2 Cor. i. 3. There is a complication of all beauties and delights in him: health hath not the comfort of beauty, nor beauty of riches, nor riches of wisdom; but God is the God of all comfort. *Fourthly*, In the chief good there must be eternity. God is a treasure that can neither be drawn low, nor drawn dry. Tho' the Angels are still depending on him, he can never be spent; he abides for ever. Eternity is a flower of his crown. Now, if God be our God, here is enough to let in full contentment into our souls. What tho' we want torch-light, if we have the sun? what if God deny us the flower, if he hath given us the jewel? how should this rock a christian's heart quiet? if we say God is our God, and we are not content, we have cause to question our interest in him.

III. I we can clear up this covenant-union, that God is our God, let this cheer and revive us in all conditions. To be content with God, is not enough, but to be cheerful. What greater cordial can you have, than union with Deity; when Jesus Christ was ready to ascend, he could not leave a richer consolation with his disciples than this, *Tell them, I go to my God and their God*, John xx. 17. Who should rejoice, if not they, who have an infinite, all-sufficient, eternal God to be their portion, who are as rich as heaven can make them? what though I want health? I have God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God, *Pf. xlii. 11*. What tho' I am low in the world? if I have not the earth, I have him that made it. The philosopher comforted himself with this, tho' he had no music or vine-trees, yet here are the household-gods with me: so, tho' we have not the vine or fig-tree, yet we have God with us. I cannot be poor; saith St. Bernard, as long as God is rich; for his riches are mine.

O let

O let the saints rejoyce in this covenant-union ! To say God is ours, is more than to say heaven is ours ; heaven would not be heaven without God. All the stars cannot make day without the sun : all the angels those morning-stars, cannot make heaven without Christ the sun of righteousness. And as to have God for our God, is matter of rejoycing in life ; so especially it will be at our death. Let a Christian think thus, I am going to my God. A child is glad when he is going home to his father. This was Christ's comfort, when he was leaving the world, *John* xx. 17. *I go to my God.* And this is a believer's death-bed cordial, I am going to my God ; I shall change my place, but not my kindred ; I go to my God and my father.

IV. If God be our God, then let us break forth into doxology and praise, *Pf.* cxviii. 28. *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee.* O infinite, astonishing mercy, that God should take dust and ashes into so near a bond of love as to be our God ! As *Micah* said, *Judges* xviii. 24. *What have I more ?* so, what hath God more ? what richer jewel hath he to bestow upon us than himself ? what hath he more ? That God should put off most of the world with riches and honour, and that he should pass over himself to us by a deed of gift, to be our God, and by virtue of this settle a kingdom upon us ; O let us praise him with the best

instrument, our heart ; and let this instrument be screwed up to the highest peg ; let us praise him with our whole heart. See how *David* riseth by degrees, *Pf.* xxxii. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce, and shout for joy.* *Be glad,* there is thankfulness ; *Rejoyce,* there is cheerfulness ; *Shout,* there is triumph. Praise is called incense, because it is so sweet a sacrifice. Let the saints be choirists in God's praises. The deepest springs yield the sweetest water ; the more deeply sensible we are of God's covenant-love to us, the sweeter praises we should yield. We should begin here to eternize God's name, and do that work on earth which we shall be always doing in heaven, *Pf.* cxlvi. 2. *While I live, will I praise the Lord.*

V. Let us carry ourselves as those who have God to be their God ; that is, when we walk so, that others may see there is something of God in us. Live holily ; what have we to do with sin ? is it not this, that if it doth not break, yet will weaken the interest ? *Hos.* xiv. 8. *What have I to do any more with idols ?* So should a Christian say, God is my God ; what have I to do any more with sin, with lust, pride, malice ? bid me commit sin ! as well bid me drink poison ; shall I forfeit my interest in God ? Let me rather die, than willingly offend him, who is the crown of my joy, the God of my salvation.

#### Exod. xx. 2. *The Land of Egypt, &c.*

THE second part of the preface, *Who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* Egypt and the house of bondage are the same ; only they are represented to us under a different expression, or notion. I begin with the first expression, *Who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*

Qu. *Why doth the Lord mention this deliverance of Israel out of the land of Egypt ?*

Ans. 1. Because of the strangeness of the deliverance. God delivered his people *Israel* by strange signs and wonders, by sending plague after plague upon *Pharaoh*, blasting the fruits of the earth, killing all the first-born in *Egypt*, *Exod.* xii. 29. And when *Israel* marched out of *Egypt*, God made the waters of the sea to part, and become a wall to his people, while they went on dry ground ; and as he

made the sea a cawsey to *Israel*, so a grave to *Pharaoh* and his chariots. Well might the Lord mention his bringing them out of the land of *Egypt*, because of the strangeness of the deliverance ; God wrought miracle upon miracle, for their deliverance.

2. God mentions *Israel's* deliverance out of *Egypt*, because of the greatness of the deliverance. God delivered *Israel* from the pollutions of *Egypt* ; *Egypt* was a bad air to live in, it was infected with idolatry : the *Egyptians* were gross idolaters, they were guilty of that which the apostle speaks of, *Rom.* i. 23. *They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.* The *Egyptians* worshipped, instead of the true God, *Firsh*, A corruptible man, they deified their king *Apis*, forbidding all, under



pain of death, to say that he was a man. 2ly, They were worshippers of birds, they worshipped the hawk. 3ly, They were worshippers of beasts, they worshipped the ox. 4ly, They were worshippers of creeping things, they worshipped the crocodile, and the Indian mouse. Therefore God mentions this, as a memorable and signal favour to *Israel*, that he brought them out of such an idolatrous country; *I brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*

The thing I would note is this, *That it is no small thing to be delivered from places of idolatry.* God speaks of it no less than ten times in the Old Testament, *I brought you out of the land of Egypt*; an idolatrous place. Had there been no iron furnace in *Egypt*, yet there being so many altars there, and false Gods, it was a great privilege to *Israel* to be delivered out of *Egypt*. *Joshua* reckons it among the chief and most memorable mercies of God to *Abraham*, that he brought him out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, where *Abraham's* ancestors served strange gods, *Josh. xxiv. 2, 3.* 'Tis well for the plant that it is set in a bad soil, to be transplanted to a better, where it may grow and flourish; so, when any are planted among idolaters, 'tis a mercy when they are removed and transplanted into *Zion*, where are the silver-drops of God's word to make them grow in holiness.

Qu. *Wherein doth it appear that it is such a great blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry?*

Ans. It is a great mercy, because our nature is so prone to idolatry. *Israel* began to be defiled with the idols of *Egypt*, *Ezek. xxiii. 3.* Dry wood is not more prone to take fire, than our nature is to idolatry. The Jews made cakes to the queen of heaven, that is the moon, *Jer. vii. 18.*

Qu. *Whence is it that we are so prone to idolatry?*

Ans. 1. Because we are led much by visible objects, and love to have our senses pleased. Men naturally fancy a god that they may see; tho' it be such a god that cannot see them, yet they would see it. The true God is invisible; this makes the idolater worship something that he may see.

2. 'Tis a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the greatness of the sin of idolatry. It is giving that glory to an image, which is due to God. All divine worship God doth appropriate to himself; it is a flower of his crown: the fat of the sacrifice

God laid claim to, *Lev. iii. 3.* Divine worship is the fat of the sacrifice, which God reserves for himself. The idolater devotes this worship to his idol, which the Lord will by no means endure, *Isa. xlii. 8.* *My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.* Idolatry is spiritual adultery, *Ezek. xxiii. 37.* *With their idols have they committed adultery.* To worship any other than God, is to break wedlock: this makes the Lord disclaim his interest in a people, *Hos. ii. 2.* *Plead with your mother, plead, for she is not my wife.* And *Exod. xxxii. 7.* *Thy people have corrupted themselves; no more my people, but thy people.* God calls idolatry blasphemy, *Ezek. xx. 27, 31.* *Thus your fathers have blasphemed me.* Idolatry is devil-worship, *Deut. xxxii. 17.* *They sacrificed to devils, not unto God; to new gods:* These new gods were old devils, *Lev. xvii. 7.* *And they shall no more offer their sacrifice unto devils;* the Hebrew word, *Lashganim*, is the hairy ones; because the devils were hairy, and appeared in the forms of satyrs and goats. How dreadful a sin is idolatry; and what a signal mercy is it to be snatched out of an idolatrous place, as *Lot* was snatched by the angels out of *Sodom*?

3. It is a mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places, because idolatry is such a silly, irrational religion, I may say, as *Jer. viii. 9.* *What wisdom is in them?* Is it not folly to refuse the best, and choose the worst? The trees of the field, in *Jotham's* parable, despised the vine-tree which cheers both God and man, and the olive which is full of fatness, and the fig-tree which is full of sweetness, and chose the bramble to reign over them; this was a foolish choice, *Judges ix. 36.* so, for us to refuse the living God, who hath power to save us, and to make choice of an idol, that hath eyes and sees not, feet, but walks not, *Pf. cxv. 6.* What a prodigy of madness is this? Therefore, to be delivered from committing such folly, is a mercy.

4. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the sad judgments inflicted upon idolaters. This is a sin enrageth God, and makes the fury come up in his face, *Ezek. xxxviii. 18.* Search through the whole book of God, and you shall find no sin God hath followed with more plagues than idolatry, *Pf. xvi. 4.* *Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another God.* *Pf. lxxviii. 58, 59.* *They moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth,*

wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; v. 60. So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh. Shiloh was a city belonging to the tribe of Ephraim; there God set his name, Jer. vii. 12. But, for their idolatry God forsook that place, gave his people up to the sword, caused his priests to be slain, his ark to be carried away captive, and it never returned to Shiloh any more. How severe was God against Israel for worshipping the golden calf? Exod. xxxii. 27. The Jews say, that in every misery that befalls them, there is *uncia aurei vituli*, an ounce of the golden calf in it, Rev. xviii. 4. Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Idolatry lived in, cuts men off from heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 9. So then it is no small mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places.

Use 1. See the goodness of God to our nation, who hath brought us out of mystical Egypt, delivering us from popery, which is *Romish* idolatry, and hath caused the light of his truth to break forth gloriously among us. In former times, and more lately in the *Marian* days, England was overspread with idolatry; we worshipped God after a false manner: that is idolatry, not only to worship a false God, but the true God in a false manner. This was our case formerly, we had purgatory, indulgences, the idolatrous mass, the Scriptures locked up in an unknown tongue, invocation of saints and angels, image-worship. Images are teachers of lies, Hab. ii. 18. Wherein do they teach lies? because they represent God in a bodily shape, whereas he cannot be seen, Deut. iv. 12. Ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice. *Quod invisibile est, pingi non potest*, Ambr. God cannot be pictured out by any finger: you cannot picture the soul, being a spirit; much less God, Isa. xl. 18. To whom then will ye liken God? The papists say, they worship God by the image; which hath a great absurdity in it, for if it be absurd to bow down to the picture of the king, when the king himself is present, then much more to bow down to the image of God, when God himself is present, Jer. xxxiii. 24. What is the popish religion, but a bundle of ridiculous ceremonies? their wax, flowers, *pixes*, *agnus Dei*, cream and oil, beads, crucifixes; what are these but Satan's policy, to dress up a carnal worship, fitted to carnal minds? Oh what cause have we to bless God, for delivering us from popery! It was a mercy to be delivered from the *Spanish* invasion

and the powder-treason; but a far greater to be delivered from the popish religion, which would have made God give us a bill of divorce.

2. If it be a great blessing to be delivered from Egypt, popish idolatry; then it shews their sin and folly, who, being brought out of Egypt, are willing to return into Egypt again; having put off the yoke of Rome, would fain put it on again. The apostle saith, *Flee from idolatry*; 1 Cor. x. 44. But these rather flee to idolatry: herein we are like the people of Israel, who, notwithstanding all the idolatry and tyranny of Egypt, yet longed to go back to Egypt, Numb. xiv. 4. Let us make a captain, and return into Egypt. But how shall they go back into Egypt? how shall they have food in the wilderness? will God rain down manna any more upon such rebels? how will they get over the red sea? will God divide the water again by miracle, for such as leave his service, and go into idolatrous Egypt? yet, say they, Let us make a captain, and go back to the *Romish* Egypt again? and if we do, what shall we get by it? I am afraid the leeks and onions of Egypt will make us sick. Do we ever think, if we drink in the cup of fornication, we shall drink in the cup of salvation? O that any should so forfeit their reason, as to enslave themselves to the see of Rome! that they should be willing to hold a candle to a mass-priest, and bow down to a strange god! let us not say, we will make a captain; but rather say as Ephraim, Hos. xiv. 8. What have I to do any more with idols?

3. If it be a mercy to be brought out of Egypt, then it is not desirable or safe to plant one's self in an idolatrous place, where it may be a capital crime to be seen with a Bible in one's hand. Some for secular gain thrust themselves among idolaters, and think there is no danger to live where Satan's seat is: but do you pray God would not lead you into temptation, and do you lead yourselves? you are in great danger of being polluted: it is hard to be as the fish, which keeps fresh in salt waters. A man cannot dwell among the Black-a-moors, but he will be discoloured; you will sooner be corrupted by idolaters, than they will be converted by you: Joseph got no good by living in an idolatrous court; he did not teach Pharaoh to pray, but Pharaoh taught him to swear, Ps. cvi. 35. They were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols. I fear this



hath been the undoing of many; they have seated themselves amongst idolaters, for the advancing their trade, and at last have not only traded with them in their commodities, but in their religion.

*Use 2.* Is it a mercy to be brought out of the land of *Egypt*, places which are defiled, and where sin reigns? then it reproaches such parents as shew little love to the souls of their children, whether it be in putting them out to service, or matching them. 1. In putting them out to service: their care is chiefly for their bodies, that they may be provided for, but care not what becomes of their souls: their souls are in *Egypt*, in houses where there is drinking, swearing, sabbath-breaking, and where God's name is every day dishonoured. 2. In matching their children, they look only at money, 2 *Cor.* vi. 24. *Be not ye unequally yoked*: if their children be equally yoked for estate, they care not whether they be unequally yoked for religion: now, to such parents, 1. Think how precious the soul of your child is; it is immortal, it is capable of communion with God and angels: and will you let this soul be lost, by placing it in a bad family? If you had an horse you loved, you would not put him into a stable with other horses that were sick and diseased; and do you not love your child better than your horse? 2. God hath intrusted you with the souls of your children, you have a charge of souls. God saith, as 1 *Kings* xx. 39. *Keep this man; if he be missing, thy life shall go for his life.* So saith God, if the soul of thy child

miscarry by thy negligence, his blood will I require at thy hand. Think of this, all ye parents; take heed of placing your children in *Egypt*, in a wicked family; do not put them in the devil's mouth: find out a sober, religious family, such a family as *Joshua's*, chap. xxiv. 15. *I and my house will serve the Lord.* Such a family as *Cranmer's*, which was *palæstra pietatis*, a nursery of piety: such a family as is a *Bethel*, of which it may be said, as *Col.* iv. 15. *The church which is in his house.*

*Use 3.* Let us pray that God would keep our *English* nation from the defilements of *Egypt*, that it may not be again overspread with superstition and idolatry: O sad religion! not only to have our estates, our bodies enslaved, but our conscience: pray that the true protestant religion may still flourish among us, that the sun of the Gospel may still shine in our horizon. The gospel lifts a people up to heaven, it is *columna & corona regni*, the crown and glory of the kingdom: if this be removed, then *Ichabod*, the glory is departed. The top of the beech-tree being cut off, the whole body of the tree withers apace: the gospel is the top of all our blessings; if this be cut, the whole body withereth soon. O pray that the Lord will continue the visible tokens of his presence among us, his ordinances, that *England* may be called, *Jehova Shammah*, *The Lord is there*, *Ezek.* xlvi. 35. Pray that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, that so glory may dwell in our land.

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#### EXOD. XX. 2. *Out of the House of Bondage.*

**E**GYPT and the house of bondage are the same, only they are expressed under a different notion. By *Egypt* is meant a place of idolatry and superstition; by the house of bondage is meant a place of affliction. *Israel*, while they were in *Egypt*, were under great tyranny; they had cruel task-masters set over them, who put them to hard labour, and set them to make brick, yet allowed them no straw; therefore *Egypt* is called the iron furnace, *Deut.* iv. 20. and here the house of bondage. From this expression, *I brought thee out of the house of bondage*, two things are to be noted; 1. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, *In the house of bondage.* 2. That God will in his due time bring them out of their afflicted

state, *I brought thee out of the house of bondage.*

1. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, *In domo servitutis*, in the house of bondage: God's people have no writ of ease granted them, no charter of exemption from trouble in this life; while the wicked are kept in sugar, the godly are oft kept in brine. And indeed, how could God's power be seen in bringing them out of trouble if he did not sometimes bring them into it? or how should God wipe away the tears from their eyes in heaven, if on earth they shed none? doubtless God sees there is need that his children should be sometimes in the house of bondage, 1 *Pet.* i. 6. *If need be, ye are in heaviness*: the body sometimes



sometimes doth more need a bitter potion than a julip.

Qu. 1. *Why God lets his people be in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state?*

Ans. He doth it, 1. For probation or trial, *Deut. viii. 16. Who led thee through that terrible wilderness, that he might humble thee and prove thee.* Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity, *Pf. xlv. 10, 11. Thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver: thou laidst affliction upon our loins.* Hypocrites may embrace the true religion in prosperity, and court this queen while she hath a jewel hung at her ear: but he is the good Christian who will keep close to God in a time of suffering, *Pf. xlv. 17. All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee: to love God in heaven, is no wonder; but to love God when he chastiseth us, this discovers sincerity.*

2. For purgation: to purge our corruption. *Ardet palea, purgatur aurum, Isa. xxvii. 9. And this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.* The eye, though it be a tender part, yet when it is sore, we put sharp powders and waters into it, to eat out the pearl: though the people of God are dear to him, yet, when corruption begins to grow in them, he will apply the sharp powder of affliction, to eat out the pearl in the eye. Affliction is God's flayel to thresh off our husks; it is a means God useth to purge our sloth, luxury, pride and love of the world. *God's furnace is in Zion, Isa. xxxi. 9.* This is not to consume, but to refine: what if we have more affliction, if by this means we have less sin.

3. For augmentation: to increase the graces of the spirit: grace thrives most in the iron furnace; sharp frosts nourish the corn, so do sharp afflictions grace: grace in the saints is often as fire hid in the embers, affliction is the bellows to blow it up into a flame. The Lord makes the house of bondage a friend to our grace: now faith and patience act their part; the darkness of the night cannot hinder the brightness of a star: so, the more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; and the more God afflicts us, the more our graces cast a sparkling lustre.

4. For preparation: to fit and prepare the saints for glory, *2 Cor. iv. 17.* Those stones which are cut out for a building, are first hewn and squared: the godly are called *living stones*, *1 Pet. ii. 5.* And God doth first hew and polish them by affliction, that they may be fit for the

heavenly building: the house of bondage prepares for the house not made with hands, *2 Cor. v. 1.* The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.

Qu. 2. *How the afflictions of the godly differ from the afflictions of the wicked?*

Ans. 1. These are but castigations, those on the wicked are punishments; these come from a father, those from a judge.

2. Afflictions on the godly are fruits of covenant-mercy, *2 Sam. vii. 14.* But afflictions on the wicked are effects of God's wrath, *Eccl. v. 17. He hath much wrath with his sickness.* Afflictions on the wicked are the pledge and earnest of hell: they are like the pinioning of a malefactor, which doth presage his execution.

3. Afflictions on the godly make them better, but afflictions on the wicked make them worse: the godly pray more, *Pf. cxxx. 1.* The wicked blaspheme more, *Rev. xvi. 9. Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.* Afflictions on the wicked make them more impenitent: every plague upon Egypt increased the plague of hardness in Pharaoh's heart. To what a prodigy of wickedness do some persons come after great sickness? affliction on the godly is like bruising of spices, which are more sweet and fragrant: affliction on the wicked is like stamping of weeds with a pestil, which makes them more unfavoury.

Use 1. It shews us, that we are not to wonder to see *Israel* in the house of bondage, *1 Pet. iv. 12.* The holiness of the saints will not excuse them from sufferings: Christ was the holy one of God, yet he was in the iron furnace: Christ's spouse is a lily among thorns, *Cant. ii. 2.* His sheep, though they have the ear-mark of election upon them, yet may have their wool fleeced off; the godly have some good in them, therefore the devil afflicts them; and some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. While there are two seeds in the world, expect to be under the black rod. The gospel tells us of reigning, but first of suffering, *1 Tim. ii. 12.*

2. It informs us, that affliction is not always the sign of God's anger: *Israel*, the apple of God's eye, a peculiar treasure to him above all people, *Exod. xix. 5.* yet these were in the house of bondage. We are apt to judge and censure them who are in an afflicted state. When the *Barbarians* saw the viper on *Paul's* hand, they said,



said, *No doubt this man is a murderer*, Acts xxviii. 4. so, when we see the viper of affliction fasten upon the godly, we are apt to censure them, and say, these are greater sinners than others, and God hates them: this rash censuring is for want of wisdom. Were not *Israel* in the house of bondage? *Jeremiah* in the dungeon? *Paul* a night and a day in the deep? God's afflicting is so far from evidencing hatred, that his not-afflicting is, *Hos.* iv. 14. *I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom. Deus maxime irascitur cum non irascitur*, Bern. God punisheth most when he doth not punish; his hand is heaviest when it seems to be lightest: the judge will not burn him in the hand whom he intends to execute.

3. If God's own *Israel* may be in the house of bondage, then afflictions do not of themselves demonstrate a man miserable. Indeed sin unrepented of, makes one miserable; but the cross doth not. If God hath a design, in afflicting his children, to make them happy, then they are not miserable; but God's afflicting them is to make them happy, therefore they are not miserable, *Job* v. 17. *Happy is the man whom God correcteth*. The world counts them happy, who can keep out of affliction; but the scripture calls them happy who are afflicted.

Qu. *How are they happy?*

Ans. 1. Because they are more holy, *Heb.* xii. 10. (2.) Because they are more in God's favour, *Prov.* iii. 12. The goldsmith loves his gold, when in the furnace. (3.) Because they have more of God's sweet presence, *Psa.* xci. 15. And they cannot be unhappy that have God's powerful presence in supporting, his gracious presence in sanctifying their affliction. (4.) Because, the more affliction they have, the more degrees of glory they shall have: the lower they have been in the iron furnace, they shall sit upon the higher throne of glory: the heavier their crosses, the heavier shall be their crown. So then, if afflictions make a Christian happy, they cannot denominate him miserable.

4. See the merciful providence of God to his children: though they may be in the house of bondage, and smart by affliction, yet they shall not be hurt by affliction. What hurt doth the fan to the corn? only separates the chaff from it: or the lance to the body? only lets out the imposthume. The house of bondage doth that which sometimes ordinances will not do; it doth humble and reform, *Job* xxxvi. 8. 11. *If they be held in cords of affliction, he o-*

*peneth their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* O what a merciful providence is this, tho' God bruise his people, yet, while he is bruising them, he is doing them good? as if one should throw a bag of money at another, and a little bruise him, yet it doth enrich him. Affliction enricheth the soul, and yields the sweet fruits of righteousness, *Heb.* xii. 11.

5. If *Israel* be in the house of bondage; if the Lord deals so with his own children, then, how severely will he deal with the wicked? if God be so severe with them he loves, how severe will he be with them he hates? if it be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? if they that pray and mourn for sin be so severely dealt with, what will become of them that swear, and break the sabbath, and are unclean? If *Israel* be in the iron furnace, the wicked shall ly in the fiery furnace of hell. It should be the saddest news to wicked men, to hear that the people of God are afflicted; let them think how dreadful will the case of sinners be, *1 Pet.* iv. 17. *Judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?* If God thresh his wheat, he will burn the chaff. If the godly suffer castigation, the wicked shall suffer condemnation. If he mingle his people's cup with wormwood, he will mingle the wicked's cup with fire and brimstone.

2 Use. 1. If *Israel* be in the house of bondage, then do not entertain too hard thoughts of affliction. Christians are apt to look upon the cross and the iron furnace as frightful things, and do what they can to shun them. Nay, sometimes, to avoid affliction, they run themselves into sin. But do not think too hardly of affliction; do not look upon it through the multiplying-glass of fear: the house of bondage is not hell. Consider, *First*, whence doth affliction come? even from a wise God, who prescribes whatever befalls us. Persecutions are but like apothecaries. They give us that physic which God prescribes. *Secondly*, Affliction hath its light side, as well as its dark. God can sweeten our afflictions, candy our wormwood, *2 Cor.* i. 5. *As our sufferings abound, so doth also our consolation.* *Argerius* dated his letters from the pleasant garden of the *Leonine* prison. God doth sometimes so revive his children in trouble, that they had rather bear their afflictions than want their comforts. Why then should Christians entertain such hard thoughts of affliction?

siction? do not look at its grim face, but at the message it brings, which is to enrich us both with grace and comfort.

2dly, If *Israel* be sometimes in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state, then think beforehand of affliction; say not as *Job* xxix. 18. *I shall die in my nest.* In the house of mirth, think of the house of bondage; you that are now *Naomi*, may be *Marah*, *Ruth* i. 20. how quickly may the scene turn, and the hyperbole of joy end in a catastrophe; all outward things are upon the Tropics, given to change. The forethoughts of affliction would make us sober and moderate in the use of lawful delights; it would cure a surfeit. Christ at a feast mentions his burial; a good antidote against a surfeit. The forethoughts of affliction would make us prepare for it; it would take us off the world, it would put us upon a search of our evidences. We should see what oil we have in our lamp, what grace we can find, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. That soldier was imprudent who had his sword to whet,

when he was just going to fight. He who fore-casts sufferings, will have the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit ready, that he may not be surprized.

3dly, If affliction do come, let us labour to deport ourselves wisely as Christians, that we may adorn our sufferings: that is, let us endure with patience; *James* v. 10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of enduring affliction and patience.* Satan labours to take advantage of us in affliction, by making us either faint or murmur; he blows the coals of passion and discontent, and then warms himself at the fire. Patience adorns sufferings. A Christian should say as Jesus Christ, *Lord, not my will, but thy will be done.* And indeed, it's a sign the affliction is sanctified, when the heart is brought to a sweet submissive frame, and then God will remove the affliction: he will take us out of the iron furnace. And that brings me to the second thing, God's deliverance of his people *Israel*, *I brought you out of the house of bondage.*

EXOD. XX. 2. *Who brought thee out of the House of Bondage.*

WE may consider these words, *Who brought thee out of the house of Bondage*; either, 1. Literally; or, 2. Spiritually, and mystically. (1.) In the letter, *I brought thee out of the house of bondage*; that is, I delivered you out of the misery and servitude you sustained in *Egypt*, when you were in the iron furnace. 2. Spiritual and mystically, *I brought thee out of the house of bondage.* So it is a type of our deliverance by Christ from sin and hell.

First, Literally, in the letter, *I brought thee out of the house of bondage.* viz. out of great misery and slavery in the iron furnace. The thing I note hence is, tho' God bring his people sometimes into trouble, yet he will bring them out again; *Israel* was in the house of bondage, but at last I brought you out of bondage. 1. That God doth deliver out of trouble. 2. In what manner. 3. When are the seasons. 4. Why God delivers. 5. How the deliverances of the godly and wicked out of trouble differ?

1st. That God doth deliver his children out of troubles, *Psal.* xxii. 4. *Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them,* 2. *Tim.* iv. 17. *And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,* viz. from Nero. *Psal.*

lxvi. 11, 12. *Thou laidst affliction upon our loins, but thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.* *Psal.* xxx. 5. *Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* God brought *Daniel* out of the lion's Den, *Zion* out of *Babylon*. God in his due time gives an issue out of trouble, *Psal.* lxxviii. 20. The tree which in the winter seems dead, in the spring revives: *Post nubila Phœbus.* Affliction may leap on us as the viper did on *Paul*, but at last this viper shall be shaken off. 'Tis called a cup of affliction, *Isa.* li. 17. The wicked drink a sea of wrath, the godly drink only a cup of affliction; and God will say shortly, *Let this cup pass away.* God will give his people a goal-delivery.

2dly, Qu. In what manner doth God deliver his people out of trouble?

Ans. He doth it like a God, in wisdom. 1. He doth it sometimes suddenly. As the angel was caused to fly swiftly, *Dan.* ix. 21. so God sometimes makes a deliverance fly swiftly upon the wing, and on a sudden he turns the shadow of death into the light of the morning. As God gives us mercies above what we can think, *Eph.* iii. 20. so sometimes before we can think of them, *Pf.* cxxvi. 1. *When the Lord turned*



the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed; we were in a dream, we never thought of it. *Joseph* could not have thought of such a sudden alteration, to be the same day freed out of prison, and made the chief ruler in the kingdom. Mercy sometimes does not stick long in the birth, but it is brought forth on a sudden. 2. God sometimes delivers his people strangely. That the whale which swallowed up *Jonah* should be a means to bring him safe to land, God sometimes delivers his people in that very way they think he will destroy: in bringing *Israel* out of *Egypt*, God stirred up the heart of the *Egyptians* to hate them, *Pf.* cv. 22. and that was the means of their deliverance. He brought *Paul* to shore by a contrary wind, and upon the broken pieces of the ship, *Acts* xxvii. 44.

3dly, Qu. When are the times and seasons that God usually delivers his people out of the bondage of affliction?

Ans. 1. When they are in the greatest extremity. When *Jonah* was in the belly of hell, then, *chap.* ii. 5. *Thou hast brought up my life from corruption.* When there is but an hair's-breadth between the godly and death, then God ushers in deliverance. When the ship in the gospel was almost covered with waves, then Christ awoke and rebuked the wind. When *Isaac* was upon the altar, and the knife going to be put to his throat, then comes the angel, *Lay not thy hand upon the child.* When *Peter* began to sink, then Christ took him by the hand. *Cum duplicantur lateres, venit Moses*: when the tale of brick was doubled, then comes *Moses* the temporal saviour. When the people of God are in the greatest danger, then appears the morning-star of deliverance. When the patient is ready to faint, now the cordial is given.

2. The second season is, when affliction hath done its work upon them: when it hath effected that which God hath sent it for. As, (1.) When it hath humbled them, *Lam.* iii. 19. *Remembring my affliction, the wormwood and gall, my soul is humbled in me.* When God's corrosive hath ate out the proud flesh. (2.) When it hath tamed their impatience. Before they were proud and impatient, like froward children that would struggle with their parents: but when their curst hearts are tamed, and they say as *Micah* vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; and as Eli, It is the Lord: let*

him do what seems good; Let him hedge me with thorns, if he will plant me with grace.

3. When they are more partakers of God's holiness, *Heb.* xii. 10. they are more full of heavenly-mindedness. When the sharp frost of affliction hath brought forth the spring-flowers of grace, now the cross is sanctified, and God will bring them out of the house of bondage. *Lucus in lætitiâ vertetur, cineres in corollas.* When the metal is refined, then it is taken out of the furnace; when affliction hath healed us, now God takes off the smarting plaster.

4thly, Qu. Why doth God bring his people out of the house of bondage?

Ans. Hereby he makes way for his own glory. God's glory is dearer to him than any thing besides; it is a crown-jewel. God by raising his people, raiseth the trophies of his own honour: he glorifies his attributes; his power, goodness, truth, do all ride in triumph.

1. His power. If God did not sometimes bring his people into trouble, how would his power be seen in bringing them out? he brought *Israel* out of the house of bondage, with miracle upon miracle; he saved them with an outstretched arm, *Pf.* cxiv. 5. *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? &c.* It is spoken of *Israel's* march out of *Egypt*; *When the sea fled, and the waters were parted each from other.* Here was the power of God set forth, *Jer.* xxxii. 27. *Is any thing too hard for me?* God loves to help, when things seem past hope; he creates deliverance, *Pf.* cxxiv. 8. He brought *Isaac* out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb. O how doth his power shine forth, when he overcomes seeming impossibilities, and works a cure when things look desperate!

2. His truth. God hath made promises to his people when they are under great pressures, to deliver them; and his truth is engaged in his promise, *Pf.* l. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee.* *Job* v. 19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles, and in seven.* How is the scripture bespangled with these promises, as the firmament is with stars? either God will deliver them from death, or by death; he will make a way to escape, *1 Cor.* x. 13. When promises are verified, God's truth is magnified.

3. His goodness. God is full of compassion to such as are in misery. The Hebrew word, *Racham*, for mercy, signifies bowels. God hath

hath *Sounding of bowels*, *Iſa. lxiii. 15.* And this ſympathy ſtirs up God to deliver, *Iſa. lxiii. 9. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them.* This makes way for the triumph of God's goodneſs. Firſt, he is tender-hearted, he will not over-afflict; he cuts aſunder the bars of iron, he breaks the yokes of the oppreſſor. Thus all his attributes ride in triumph, in the ſaving his people out of trouble.

*5thly, Qu. How the deliverances of the godly and wicked out of trouble differ?*

*Anſ. 1.* The deliverance of the godly are preſervations; of the wicked are reſervations, *2 Pet. ii. 9. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly, and to reſerve the unjuſt to be puniſhed.* A ſinner may be delivered from dangerous ſickneſs, and out of priſon; but all this is but a reſervation to ſome greater evil.

*2.* God delivers the wicked (or rather ſpares them) in anger. Deliverances to the wicked are not given as pledges of God's love, but ſymptoms of diſpleaſure; as quails were given to *Iſrael* in anger. But deliverances of the godly are in love, *2 Sam. xxii. 20. He delivered me becauſe he delighted in me. Iſa. xxxviii. 17. Thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered me from the pit of corruption;* or, as in the *Hebrew*, *Chofhianā Naphſhi, Thou haſt delivered me from the pit of corruption.* A wicked man may ſay, Lord, thou haſt delivered me out of the pit of corruption; but a godly man may ſay, *Lord, thou haſt loved me out of the pit of corruption.* It is one thing to have God's power deliver us, and another thing to have his love deliver us. O, ſaith *Hezekiah, Thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered me from the pit of corruption.*

*Qu. How may it be known that a deliverance comes in love?*

*Anſ. 1.* When a deliverance makes our heart boil over in love to God, *Pſ. cxvi. 1. I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice.* It is one thing to love our mercies, another thing to love the Lord: then a deliverance is in love, when it cauſeth love.

*2.* Then a deliverance is in love, when we have hearts to improve it for God's glory. The wicked inſtead of improving their deliverance for God's glory, improve their corruption; they grow worſe after, as the metal when it is taken out of the fire grows harder; but then our deliverance is in love, when we improve it for God's glory. God raiſeth us out of a low condition, and we liſt him up in our praiſes, and

honour him with our ſubſtance, *Prov. iii. 9.* He recovers us from ſickneſs, and we ſpend ourſelves in his ſervice. Mercy is not as the ſun to the fire, to dull it, and put it out; but as oil to the wheel, to make it move faſter.

*3.* Then a deliverance comes in love, when it makes us more exemplary in holineſs: our lives are walking Bibles. A thouſand praiſes and doxologies do not honour God ſo much as the mortifying one luſt, *Obadiah 17. On mount Zion there ſhall be deliverance and holineſs.* When theſe two go together, deliverance and holineſs; when, being made monuments of mercy, we are patterns of piety; now a deliverance comes in love, and we may ſay as *Hezekiah, Thou haſt loved me out of the pit of corruption.*

*Uſe 1.* If God brings his people out of bondage, then let none deſpond in trouble, ſay not, I ſhall ſink under this burden; as *David, I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of Saul.* God can make this text good *perſonally* and *nationally*, to bring his people out of the houſe of bondage: when he ſees a fit ſeaſon, he will put forth his arm and ſave them; and he can do it with eaſe, *2 Chron. xiv. 11. It is nothing for thee, Lord, to help.* He that turns the tides, can turn the times: he that raiſed *Lazarus* when he was dead, can raiſe thee when thou art ſick, *Iſa. lxiii. 5. I looked, and there was none to help; therefore my own arm brought ſalvation.* Do not deſpond; believe in God's power: faith ſets God on work to deliver us.

*Uſe 2.* Labour (if you are in any trouble) to be fitted for deliverance: many would have deliverance, but are not fitted for it.

*Qu. When are we fitted for deliverance?*

*Anſ.* When we are by our afflictions conformed to Chriſt: namely, when we have learned obedience, *Heb. v. 8. He learned obedience by the things which he ſuffered;* that is, he learned ſweet ſubmiſſion to his Father's will, *Luke xxii. 42. Not my will, but thy will be done.* When we have thus learned obedience by our ſufferings, we are willing to do what God would have us do, and be what God would have us be. Now we are conformed to Chriſt, and are fitted for deliverance.

*3.* If God hath brought you at any time out of the houſe of bondage, out of great and eminent troubles, be much in doxology and praiſe. Deliverance calls for praiſe, *Pſ. xxx. 11, 12. Thou haſt put off my ſackcloth; and girded me with gladneſs: to the end that my glory may ſing*



*sing praise to thee.* My glory, that is, my tongue, which is the instrument of glorifying thee. The saints are temples of the holy Ghost, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Where should God's praises be founded but in his temples? *Beneficium postulat officium*: the deepest springs yield the sweetest water; and hearts deeply sensible of God's deliverances yield the sweetest praises. *Moses* tells *Pharaoh*, when he was going out of *Egypt*, *We will go with our sheep and our cattle*, *Exod. x. 9.* Why so, because he might have sacrifices of thanksgiving ready to offer to God for their deliverance. To have a thankful heart for deliverance is a greater blessing than the deliverance itself, *Luke xvii. 15.* One of the lepers, *when he saw he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.* The leper's thankful heart was a greater blessing than to be healed of his leprosy: have any of you here been brought out of the house of bondage; out of prison, sickness, or any death-threatening danger? do not forget to be thankful: be not graves, but temples. And, that you may be the more thankful, observe every emphasis and circumstance in your deliverance; as to be brought out of trouble when you were *in articulo mortis*, there was but an hair's breadth between you and death; or, to be brought out of affliction, without sin, you did not purchase your deliverance by the ensnaring of your consciences; or, to be brought out of trouble upon the wings of prayer; or, that those who were the occasions of bringing you into trouble, should be the instruments of bringing you out: these circumstances, being well weighed, do heighten a deli-

verance, and should heighten our thankfulness. The cutting of a stone may be of more value than the stone itself; and the circumstancing of a deliverance may be greater than the deliverance itself.

*Qu. But how shall we praise God in a right manner for deliverance?*

*Ans. 1.* Be holy persons. In the sacrifice of thanksgiving, whosoever did eat thereof, with their uncleanness upon them, were to be cut off, *Lev. vii. 20.* to typify how unpleasing their praises and thank-offerings are who live in sin.

2. Praise God with humble hearts, acknowledge how unworthy you were of deliverance: God's mercies are not debts, but legacies; and that you should have a legacy given you, be humble, *Rev. xi. 16.* *The Elders fell upon their faces* (an expression of humility) *and worshipped and praised God.*

3. Praise God for deliverances cordially, *Pf. cxi. 1.* *I will praise the Lord with my whole heart.* In religion there is no music but in consort, when heart and tongue join.

4. Praise God for deliverances constantly, *Pf. cxlvi. 2.* *While I live will I bless the Lord*: some will be thankful while the memory of a deliverance is fresh, and then they leave off. Like the *Carthaginians*, who used at first to send the tenth of their yearly revenue to *Hercules*; but by degrees they grew weary, and left off sending. But we must be constant in our eucharistical sacrifice or thank-offering: the motion of our praise must be like the motion of our pulse, which beats as long as life lasts, *Pf. cxlvi. 1.* *I will sing praises to my God while I have a being.*

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#### EXOD. XX. 2. Out of the House of Bondage.

Secondly, **T**HESE words are to be understood mystically and spiritually. By *Israel's* deliverance from the house of bondage, is typified their spiritual deliverance from sin, Satan and hell.

1. *From sin.*] *The house of bondage was a type of Israel's deliverance from sin.* Sin is the true bondage, it enslaves the soul. *Nihil durius servitute*, *Cicero.* *Of all conditions, servitude is the worst. I was held before conversion* (saith *Austin*) *not with an iron chain, but with the obstinacy of mine own will.* Sin is the enslaver: sin is called a law, *Rom. vii. 23.* because it hath such a binding power over a man; and it is said to reign, *Rom. vi. 12.* because it ex-

erciseth a tyrannical power: and men are said to be the servants of sin, *Rom. vi. 17.* because they are so enslaved by it. Thus sin is the house of bondage. *Israel* was not so enslaved in the iron furnace, as the sinner is by sin: those are worse slaves and vassals who are under the power of sin, than those are who are under the power of earthly tyrants.

1. Other slaves have the tyrants only ruling over their bodies; but the sinner hath his soul tyrannized over; the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and was once crowned with perfect knowledge and holiness, now this prince goes on foot; it is enslaved, and made a lackey to every base lust.

2. Other

2. Other slaves have some pity shewn them; the tyrant gives them meat, and lets them have hours for their rest; but sin is a merciless tyrant, it will let men have no rest. *Judas* had no rest until he had betrayed Christ; and after that, he had less rest in his conscience. How doth a man hackney himself out in the service of sin, waste his body, break his sleep, distract his mind? a wicked man is every day doing sin's drudgery-work.

3. Other slaves, tho' they are set about servile work, yet about lawful: it is lawful to work in the galley, tug at the oar; but all the laws and commands of sin are unlawful. Sin saith to one man, defraud; to another, be unchast; to another, take revenge; to another, take a false oath. Thus all sin's commands are unlawful; we cannot obey sin's law, but by breaking God's law.

4. Other slaves are forced against their will: *Israel* groaned under slavery, *Exod.* ii. 23. but sinners are content to be under the command of sin; they are willing to be slaves, they love their chains, they will not take their freedom: they glory in their shame, *Phil.* iii. 19. They wear their sins, not as their fetters, but their ornament: they rejoyce in iniquity, *Jer.* xi. 15.

5. Other slaves are brought to correction; but sin's slaves are, without repentance, brought to condemnation: other slaves ly in the iron furnace, sin's slaves ly in the fiery furnace. What freedom of will hath a sinner to his own confusion, when he can do nothing but what sin will have him? he is enslaved. Thus sinners are in the house of bondage; but God takes his elect out of this house of bondage: he beats off the chains and fetters of sin; he rescues them from their slavery; he makes them free, by bringing them into the glorious liberty of the children of God, *Rom.* viii. The law of love now commands, not the law of sin. Tho' the life of sin be prolonged, yet not the dominion: as those beasts in *Daniel* had their lives prolonged for a season, but their dominion was taken away, *Dan.* vii. 12. The saints are made spiritual kings, to rule and conquer their corruptions, to bind these kings in chains. This is matter of the highest praise and thanksgiving, to be thus taken out of the house of bondage, to be freed from enslaving lusts, and made kings to reign in glory for ever.

II. The bringing *Israel* out of the house of

bondage, was a type of their deliverance from Satan. Thus men naturally are in the house of bondage, they are enslaved to Satan: Satan is the prince of this world, *John* xiv. 30. and the God of this world, *2 Cor.* iv. 4. Because he hath such power to command and enslave them, Tho' Satan shall one day be a close prisoner in chains, yet now he doth insult and tyrannize over the souls of men: sinners are under the rule of Satan, he exerciseth over them such a jurisdiction as *Cesar* did over the senate. The Devil fills men's heads with error, and their hearts with malice, *Acts* v. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart?* A sinner's heart is the Devil's mansion-house, *Matth.* xii. 44. *I will return into mine house.* And sure that must needs be an house of bondage, which is the Devil's mansion-house. Satan is a perfect tyrant: 1. He rules men's minds, he blinds them with ignorance, *2 Cor.* iv. 4. *The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.* 2. He rules their memories; they shall remember that which is evil, and forget that which is good: their memories are like a fiercer or strainer, that lets go all the pure liquor, and retains only the dregs. 3. He rules their wills: tho' the Devil cannot force the will, yet he draws it, *John* viii. 44. *The lusts of your father you will do.* He hath got your hearts, and him you will obey: his strong temptations do more draw men to evil, than all the promises of God can draw them to good. This is the state of every man by nature, he is in the house of bondage, the Devil hath him in his power: a sinner grinds in the Devil's mill; he is at the command of Satan, as the ass is at the command of the driver. No wonder to see men oppress and persecute; these slaves must do what the God of this world will have them: how could those swine but run, when the Devil entered into them? *Matth.* viii. 32. When the Devil tempted *Ananias* to tell a lie, he could not but speak what Satan had put in his heart, *Acts* v. 3. When the Devil entered into *Judas*, and bid him betray Christ, *Judas* would do it, tho' he hanged himself. This case is sad and dismal, to be thus in the house of bondage, under the power and tyranny of Satan. When *David* would curse the enemies of God, how did he pray against them? That Satan might be at their right-hand, *Pf.* cix. 6. He knew he could lead them into any snare: if Satan be at the sinner's right-hand, let the sinner take heed he be not set on God's



left-hand. Is not this a case to be bewailed, to see men taken captive by Satan at his will? 2 *Tim.* ii. 16. he leads sinners as slaves before him in triumph; he possesseth them. If people should see but their beasts bewitched and possessed of the Devil, they would be much troubled; yet their souls are possessed by Satan, but they are not sensible. [What can be worse than to be in the house of bondage, to have the Devil hurry men on in their lust to perdition?] Sinners are willingly slaves to Satan; they love their gaoler; are content to sit quietly under Satan's jurisdiction; they chuse this bramble to rule them, tho', within a while, fire will come out of this bramble to devour them, *Judges* ix. Now, what an infinite mercy of God is it, when he brings poor souls out of this house of bondage, when he gives them a goal-delivery from the prince of darkness! Jesus CHRIST redeems captives, he ransoms sinners by price, and rescues them by force: as *David* took a lamb out of the lion's mouth, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 34. So Christ rescues souls out of the mouth of this roaring lion. O what a mercy is it to be brought out of the house of bondage, to be taken from being made captives to the prince of the air, and to be made subjects of the Prince of peace! And this is done by the preaching of the word, *Acts* xxvi. 18. *To turn them from the power of Satan unto God.*

III. The bringing of *Israel* out of the house of bondage, was a type of their being delivered from hell. Hell is *domus servitutis*, an house of bondage; an house built on purpose for sinners to ly in.

1. That there is such an house of bondage where the damned ly, *Psa.* ix. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell.* *Matth.* xxiii. 33. *How can ye escape the damnation of hell?* If any one shall ask where this house of bondage is, where is the place of hell? I wish you may never know feelingly. *Let us not so much* (saith *Chrysostom*) *labour to know where hell is, as how to escape it.* Yet, to satisfy curiosity, hell is *locus subterraneus*, some place beneath, *Prov.* v. 24. *Hell beneath.* *Hesiod* saith, *Hell is as far under the earth, as heaven is above it,* *Luke* viii. 31. *The devils besought Christ, that he would not command them to go into the deep.* Hell is in the deep.

2 *Qu.* *Why there must be this house of bondage? why an hell?*

*Ans.* Because there must be a place for the execution of divine justice: earthly monarchs

have their prison for malefactors, and shall not God have his? sinners are criminal persons, they have offended God; and it would not consist with God's holiness and justice, to have his laws infringed, and not appoint penalties for the transgressors.

3. The dreadfulnes of this place. Could you but for one hour hear the groans and shrieks of the damned, it would confirm you in this truth, that hell is an house of bondage: hell is the emphasis of misery. Besides the *pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, which is the exclusion of the soul from the glorified sight of God, which divines think the worst part of hell; I say, besides this, there will be *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense. If, when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible (as in the case of *Spira*) then what will hell itself be? That I may describe this house of bondage,

1. In hell there will be a plurality of torments, 1. *Bonds and chains*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. 2. The worm, *Mark* ix. 44. this is the worm of conscience: and the lake of fire, *Rev.* xx. 15. other fire is but painted to this.

2. This house of hell is haunted with devils, *Matth.* xxv. 41. *Anselm* hath a saying, *I had rather endure all torments, than see the devil with bodily eyes.* Such as go to hell, must not only be forced to behold the Devil, but must be shut up in the den with this lion; they must keep the devil company: the devil is full of spite against mankind; this red dragon will spit fire in men's faces.

3. The torments of hell abide for ever, *Rev.* xiv. 11. *The smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever,* *Mark* ix. 44. Time cannot finish it, tears cannot quench it: the wicked are salamanders, who live always in the fire of hell, and are not consumed: after sinners have lain millions of years in hell, their punishment is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; yet, if after all that time the damned might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word EVER breaks the heart.

*Qu.* *But how doth this seem to stand with God's justice, for a sin committed in a moment, to punish it with eternal torment?*

*Ans.* 1. Because there is an eternity of sin in man's

man's nature. 2. Because sin is *crimen læsæ majestatis*, it is committed against an infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and proportionably the punishment must be infinite. Now, because a finite creature cannot bear infinite wrath, therefore he must be eternally satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once. Now then, if hell be such an house of bondage, what infinite cause have they to bless God, who are delivered from it? 1 *Theff.* i. 10. *Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come.* Jesus Christ suffered the torments of hell in his soul, that believers should not suffer them. If we are thankful, when we are ransomed out of prison, or delivered from fire, O how should we bless God to be preserved from the wrath to come! And that which may cause the more thankfulness, is because the most part go into the house of bondage, the most part go to hell: therefore to be of the number of these few that are delivered from it, is matter of infinite thankfulness. I say, must go to this house of bondage when they die; must go to hell, *Matth.* vii. 13. *Broad is the way which leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.* The greatest part of the world lies in wickedness, 1 *John* v. 19. Divide the world, saith *Brerewood*, into thirty-one parts, nineteen parts of it are possessed by *Jews* and *Turks*, seven parts by *Heathens*; so that there are but five parts of Christians, and among these Christians so many seduced papists on the one hand, and so many formal protestants on the other, that we may conclude the major part of the world goes to hell. 1. The scripture compares the wicked to briars, *Isa.* x. 17. There are but few lilies in your fields, but in every

hedge thorns and briars. 2. *To the mire in the streets*, *Isa.* x. 6. Few jewels or precious stones in the street, but you cannot go a step but you meet with mire. The wicked are as common as the dirt in the street: look into the generality of people, how many drunkards for one that is sober? how many adulterers for one that is chaste? how many hypocrites for one that is sincere? The Devil hath the harvest, and God only a few gleanings. Oh then, such as are delivered from the house of bondage, hell, have infinite cause to admire and bless God. How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? when most are carried prisoners to hell, they are delivered from wrath to come.

Qu. *How shall I know I am delivered from hell?*

Ans. 1. Those whom Christ saves from hell, he saves from sin, *Matth.* i. 21. *He shall save his people from their sins.* Hath God delivered you from the power of corruption, from pride, malice, lust? if he hath delivered you from the hell of sin, then he hath delivered you from the hell of torment.

2. If you have got an interest in Christ, prizing, confiding, loving him, then you are delivered from hell and damnation, *Rom.* viii. 1. *No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* If you are in Christ, then he hath put the garment of his righteousness over you, and hell-fire can never singe this garment. *Pliny* observes, nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood: the salt tears of repentance and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell, that it shall never kindle upon you.

## OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

EXOD. XX. 3. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me, &c.*

**B**EFORE I come to the commandment, I shall premise some things about the moral law: answer questions, rules.

Qu. 1. *What is the difference between the moral law and the gospel?*

Ans. 1. The law requires that we worship God as our Creator: the gospel requires that

we worship God in and through Christ. God in Christ is propitious: out of Christ we may see God's power, justice, holiness; in Christ we see his mercy displayed.

2. The moral law requires obedience, but gives no strength (as *Pharaoh* required brick, but gave no straw) but the gospel gives strength:

the



the gospel bestows faith upon the elect, the gospel sweetens the law, it makes us serve God with delight.

Qu. 2. *What use is the moral law to us?*

Ans. The law is a glass to shew us our sins, that so, seeing our pollution and misery, we may be forced to flee to Christ to satisfy for former guilt, and save from future wrath, *Gal. iii. 24. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.*

Qu. 3. *But is the moral law still in force to believers? is it not abolished to them?*

Ans. In some sense it is abolished to believers. 1. In respect of justification; they are not justified by their obedience to the moral law. Believers are to make great use of the moral law (as I shall shew) but they must trust only to Christ's righteousness for justification; as *Noah's* dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety. If the moral law could justify, what need were there of Christ's dying? 2. The moral law is abolished to believers, in respect of the malediction of it: they are freed from the curse and damnable power of it, *Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

Qu. 4. *How was Christ made a curse for us?*

Ans. Christ may be considered, 1. As the Son of God, and so he was not made a curse. 2. As our pledge and surety, *Heb. vii. 22.* and so he was made a curse for us: this curse was not upon his Godhead, but upon his manhood. This curse was the wrath of God lying upon him; and thus Christ hath taken away from believers the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. But tho' the moral law is thus far abolished, yet it remains as a perpetual rule to believers: tho' the moral law be not their Saviour, yet it is their guide: tho' it be not *fœdus*, a covenant of life; yet it is *norma*, a rule of living: every Christian is bound to conform to the moral law; and write, as exactly as he can, after this copy, *Rom. iii. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith, God forbid.* Tho' a Christian is not under the condemning power of the law, yet he is under the commanding power; to love God, to reverence and obey him, this is a law always binds, and will bind in heaven. This I urge against the *Antinomians*, who say, the moral law is abrogated to believers; which, as it contradicts scripture, so it is a key to open the door to all licentiousness. They who will not have

the law to rule them, shall never have the gospel to save them. Having answered these questions, I shall in the next place, lay down some general rules for the right understanding of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments: these rules may serve to give us some light into the sense and meaning of the commandments.

Rule. 1. The commands and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart.

1. The commands of the moral law reach the heart: the commandments require not only outward actions but inward affections; they require not only the outward act of obedience, but the inward affection of love, *Deut. vi. 5. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart.*

2. The threats and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart: the law of God forbids not only the act of sin, but the desire and inclination; not only doth it forbid adultery, but lusting, *Matth. v. 28.* Not only stealing, but coveting, *Rom. vii. 7. Lex humana ligat manum, lex divina comprimit animam:* man's law binds only the hands, God's law binds the heart.

Rule 2. In the commandments there is a *synecdoche*, more is intended than is spoken.

1. Where any duty is commanded, there the contrary sin is forbidden, &c. When we are commanded to keep the sabbath-day holy, there we are forbidden to break the sabbath: when we are commanded to live in a calling, *Six days shalt thou labour,* there we are forbidden to live idly, and out of a calling. 2. Where any sin is forbidden, there the contrary duty is commanded: when we are forbidden to take God's name in vain, the contrary duty is commanded, that we should reverence his name, *Deut. xxviii. 58. That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.* Where we are forbidden to wrong our neighbour, there is the contrary duty included, that we should do him all the good we can, by vindicating his name, and supplying his wants.

Rule 3. Where any sin is forbidden in the commandment, there the occasion of it is also forbidden. Where murder is forbidden, there envy and rash anger are forbidden, which may occasion it. Where adultery is forbidden in the commandment, there is forbidden all that may lead to it, as wanton glances of the eye, or coming into the company of an harlot, *Prov. v. 8. Come not nigh the door of her house:* he who would be free from the plague, must

must not come near the infected house. Under the law the *Nazarite* was forbid to drink wine, nor might he eat grapes of which the wine was made.

**Rule 4.** *In relato subintelligitur correlatum.* Where one relation is named in the commandment, there another relation is included. Where the child is named, there the father is included: where there is the duty of children to parents mentioned, there is included also the duty of parents to children: where the child is commanded to honour the parent, there is implied that the parent is also commanded to instruct, to love, to provide for the child.

**Rule 5.** Where greater sins are forbidden, there lesser sins are also forbidden. Tho' no sin in its own nature is little, yet comparatively one may be less than another: where idolatry is forbidden, there is forbidden superstition, or bringing any innovation into God's worship, which he hath not appointed. As the sons of *Aaron* were forbid to worship an idol, so to sacrifice to God with strange fire, *Lev. x. 1.* Mixture in sacred things, is like a dash in the wine, which tho' it gives it a colour, yet doth but debase and adulterate it. 'Tis highly provoking to God, to bring any superstitious ceremony into his worship, which he hath not prescribed; it is to tax God's wisdom, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served.

**Rule 6.** The law of God is copulative; *Lex est copulativa*: the first and second tables are knit together; piety to God, and equity to our neighbour? these two tables, which God hath joyned together, must not be put asunder. Try a moral man by the duties of the first table, piety to God, and there you will find him negligent; try an hypocrite by the duties of the second table, equity to his neighbour, and there you find him tardy. He who is strict in the second table, but neglects the first, or he who is zealous in the first table, but neglects the second, his heart is not right with God. The *Pharisees* were the highest pretenders to the first table, zeal and holiness: but Christ detects their hypocrisy, *Matth. xxiii. 23.* *Ye have omitted judgment, mercy, and faith.* They were bad in the second table; they omitted judgment, that was, being just in their dealings; mercy, in relieving the poor; and faith, that is faithfulness in their promises and contracts with men. God wrote both the tables, and our obedience must set a seal to both.

**Rule 7.** God's law forbids not only the acting of sin in our own persons, but being accessory to, or having any hand in the sins of others.

**Qu.** *How and in what sense may we be said to partake and have an hand in the sins of others?*

**Ans. 1.** By decreeing unrighteous decrees, and imposing on others that which is unlawful. *Jeroboam* made the people of *Israel* to sin: he was accessory to their idolatry, by setting up golden calves: so *David*, tho' he did not in his own person kill *Uriah*, yet because he wrote a letter to *Joab*, to set *Uriah* on the fore-front of the battle, and it was done by his command, therefore he was accessory to *Uriah's* death, and the murder of him was laid to *David's* charge by the prophet, *2 Sam. xii. 9.* *Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword.*

2. We become accessory to the sins of others, by not hindering them when it is in our power, *Qui non prohibet cum potest, jubet.* If a master of a family see his servant break the sabbath, or hears him swear, and lets him alone, doth not use the power he hath to suppress him, he becomes accessory to his sin. *Eli*, for not punishing his sons when they made the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, made himself guilty, *1 Sam. iii. 14.* He that suffers an offender to pass unpunished, makes himself an offender.

3. By counselling, abetting, or provoking others to sin. *Ahitophel* made himself guilty of the fact, by giving counsel to *Absalom* to go in and defile his father's concubines, *2 Sam. xvi. 21.* He who shall tempt or solicit another to be drunk, tho' he himself be sober, yet being the occasion of another's sin, he is accessory to it, *Hab. ii. 15.* *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth the bottle to him.*

4. By consenting to another's sin: *Saul* did not cast one stone at *Stephen*, yet the scripture saith, *Saul was consenting to his death.* *Acts viii.*

1. Thus he had an hand in it. If several did combine to murder a man, and they should tell another of their intent and he should give his consent to it, he were guilty: tho' his hand were not in the murder, yet his heart was in it; tho' he did not act it, yet he did approve it, so it became his sin.

5. By example, *vivitur exemplis.* Examples are powerful and cogent, setting a bad example occasions another to sin; and so a person becomes



comes accessory. If the father swears, and the child, by his example, learn to swear, the father is accessory to the child's sin; he taught him by his example. As there are diseases hereditary, so sins.

*Rule 8.* The last rule about the commandments, is this, that tho' we cannot, by our own strength, fulfil all these commandments, yet doing, *quoad posse*, what we are able, the Lord hath provided encouragement for us. There is a threefold encouragement;

1. That tho' we have not ability to obey any one command, yet God hath, in the new covenant, promised to work that in us, which he requires, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27. I will cause you to walk in my statutes.* God commands us to love him: alas, how weak is our love! it is like the herb that is hot only in the first degree; but God hath promised to circumcise our hearts, that we shall love him, *Deut. xxx. 6.* He that doth command us, will enable us. God commands us to turn from sin, but alas, we have not power to turn; therefore God hath promised to turn us, to put his spirit within us, and turn the heart of stone into flesh, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* There is nothing in the command, but the same is in the promise. Therefore,

Christian, be not discouraged, tho' thou hast no strength of thy own, yet God will give thee this strength. The iron hath no power to move, but when the loadstone draws it, it can move, *Isa. xxvi. 12. Thou hast wrought all our works in us.*

2. Tho' we cannot exactly fulfil the moral law, yet God will, for Christ's sake, mitigate the rigour of the law, and accept of something less than he requires. God in the law requires exact obedience, yet will accept of sincere obedience: he will abate of something of the degree, if there be truth in the inward parts; God will see the faith, and pass by the failing; the gospel remits something of the severity of the moral law.

3. Wherein our personal obedience comes short, God will be pleased to accept us in our surety, *Eph. i. 6. He hath accepted us in his Beloved.* Tho' our obedience be imperfect, yet, through Christ our surety, God looks upon it as perfect. And that very service which God's law might condemn, God's mercy is pleased to crown, by virtue of the blood of our Mediator. Having given you these rules about the commandments, I shall come next to the direct handling of them.

## OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

*Exod. xx. 3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

*Quest.* **W**H<sup>Y</sup> doth the commandment run in the second person singular, Thou? why doth not God say, You shall have no other gods, but, Thou?

*Ans.* Because the commandment concerns every one, and God would have you take it as spoken to you by name. Tho' we are forward to take privileges to ourselves, yet we are apt to shift off duty from ourselves to others: therefore the commandment runs in the second person, *Thou* and *Thou*, that every one may know, that the commandment is spoken to him, as it were, by name. And so I come to the commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*: this commandment may well lead the van, and be set in the front of all the commandments, because it is the foundation of all true religion. The sum of this commandment is, that we should sanctify God in our hearts, and give him a precedency above all created beings. There are two branches of this com-

mandment; 1. That we must have one God. 2. That we must have but one. Or thus, (1.) That we must have God for our God. (2.) That we must have no other. 1. That we must have God for our God: it is manifest that we must have a God, and *who is God save the Lord?* 2 Sam. xxii. 32. The Lord *Jehovah* (one God in three persons) is the true, living, eternal God; and him must we have for our God.

*Qu.* 1. *What is it to make God to be a God to us?*

*Ans.* 1. To make God to be a God to us, is to acknowledge him for a God: the gods of the heathens are idols, *Pf. xcvi. 5.* and we know that an idol is nothing, 1 Cor. viii. 4. that is, it hath nothing of deity in it: if we cry, *Help, O Idol*, an idol cannot help; the idols were themselves carried into captivity, *Isa. xlv. 2.* so that an idol is nothing; vanity is ascribed to it, *Jer. xiv. 22.* we do not acknowledge it to be a God. But this is to make God to be a God

God to us, when we do, *ex animo*, acknowledge him to be God, 1 *Kings* xviii. 39. All the people fell on their faces, and said, *The Lord he is the God! the Lord he is the God!* Yea, we acknowledge God to be the only God, 2 *Kings* xix. 15. *O Lord God of Israel which dwellest between the Cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone.* Deity is a jewel belongs only to his crown. Yet further, we acknowledge that there is no God like him, 1 *Kings* viii. 22, 23. *And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord; and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no god like thee.* Ps. lxxxix. 6. *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord.* In the Chaldee it is, *Who among the angels?* None can do as God: he brought the world out of nothing; *And hanged the earth upon nothing*, xxvi. 7. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we are persuaded in our hearts, and confess with our tongues, and subscribe with our hand, that God is the only true God, and that there is none comparable to him.

2. To make God to be a God to us, is to choose him, *Josh.* xxi. 15. *Choose ye this day whom you will serve: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord:* that is, we will choose the Lord to be our God. It is one thing for the judgment to approve of God, and another for the will to choose him. Religion is not a matter of chance, but choice.

Qu. *What is antecedent to or goes before this choice?*

Ans. 1. Before this choosing God for our God, there must be knowledge: we must know God, before we can choose him; before one chuse the person he will marry, he must first have some knowledge and cognizance of the person: so we must know God, before we can choose him for our God, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 9. *Know thou the God of thy Father.* We must know God in his attributes, glorious in holiness, rich in mercy, faithful in promises. We must know God in his Son: as in a glass a face is represented, so in Christ, as in a transparent glass, we see God's beauty and love shine forth. This knowledge must go before our choosing of God. *Lactantius* said, all the learning of the philosophers was without a head, because it wanted the knowledge of God. 2. Wherein our choosing of God consists: it is an act of mature deliberation; a Christian having viewed the superlative excellencies in

God, and being stricken into an holy admiration of his perfections, he singles out God from all other objects to set his heart upon: he saith, as *Jacob*, Gen. xxviii. 21. *The Lord shall be my God.* 3. The effect of choosing God: the soul that chooseth God, devotes himself to God, Ps. cxix. 38. *Thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.* As the vessels of the sanctuary were consecrated and set apart from common to holy uses; so the soul who hath chosen God to be his God, hath dedicated and set himself apart for God, and will be no more for profane uses.

3. To make God to be a God to us, is to enter into solemn covenant with him, that he should be our God: after choice follows the marriage-covenant. As God makes a covenant with us, *Isa.* liii. 3. *I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:* so we make a covenant with him, 2 *Chron.* xv. 12. *They entered into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers:* And *Isa.* xlv. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord;* like soldiers, that subscribe their names in the muster-roll. This covenant, *That God shall be our God*, we have often renewed in the Lord's supper: and it is like a seal to a bond, to bind us fast to God, and to keep us that we do not depart from him.

4. To make God to be a God to us, is to give him adoration: which consists, 1. In reverencing of him, Ps. lxxxix. 7. *God is to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.* The Seraphims, who stood about God's throne, covered their faces, *Isa.* vi. And *Elijah* wrapt himself in a mantle, when the Lord passed by, in token of reverence. This reverence shews the high esteem we have of God's sacred Majesty. 2. Adoration is in bowing to him, or worshipping him, Ps. xxix. 2. *Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* Neh. viii. 6. *They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord, with their faces to the ground.* Divine worship is the peculiar honour belongs to the God-head: this God is jealous of, and will have no creature share in, *Isa.* xlii. 8. *My glory will I not give to another.* Magistrates may have a civil respect or veneration, God only a religious adoration.

5. To make God to be a God to us, is to fear him, *Deut.* xxviii. 58. *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.* This fearing of God is, (1.) To have God always in our eye, Ps. xvi. 8. *I have set*



the Lord always before me. And *Pf. xxv. 15.* Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord. He who fears God, imagines, that whatever he is doing, God looks on, and, as a judge, weighs all his actions. (2.) To fear God, is, when we have such an holy awe of God upon our hearts, that we dare not sin, *Pf. iv. 4.* Stand in awe and sin not. The wicked sin and fear not; the godly fear, and sin not, *Gen. xxxix. 9.* How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? bid me sin, bid me drink poison. It is a saying of *Anselm*, If hell were on one side, and sin on the other, I would rather leap into hell, than willingly sin against my God. 1. This glorious and fearful name: he who fears God will not sin, tho' it be never so secret, *Lev. xix. 14.* Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God. Suppose you should curse a deaf man, he cannot hear you curse him: or, if you lay a block in a blind man's way, and make him fall, he cannot see you lay it: ay, but the fear of God will make you forsake these sins which can neither be heard nor seen by men. 2. Where the fear of God is, it destroys the fear of man: the three children feared God, therefore they fear not the king's wrath, *Dan. iii. 16.* The greater noise drowns the less; the noise of thunder drowns the noise of a river; so when the fear of God is superintendent in the soul, it drowns all other carnal fear. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we have an holy filial fear of him; *That thou mayest fear.*

6. To make God to be a God to us, is to trust in him, *Pf. cxli. 8.* Mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee will I trust. 2 Sam. xxii. 3. The God of my rock, in him will I trust. There is nothing we can trust in but God: all the creatures are a refuge of lies; they are like the Egyptian reed, too weak to support us, but strong enough to wound us. *Omnis motus fit super immobili.* God only is a sufficient foundation to build our trust upon: and then, when we trust, we make him a God to us; else we make him an idol, if we do not trust in him. Trusting in God, is, when we rely on his power as a Creator, and on his love as a Father. Trusting in God, is, when we commit our chief treasure to him: our soul is our chief treasure, we commit our soul to him, *Pf. xxxi. 5.* Into thy hands I commit my spirit. As the orphan trusts his estate with his guardian, so we trust our souls with God: this is to make him a God

to us. Qu. How shall we know that we trust in God aright? Ans. If we trust in God aright, then we will trust in God at one time as well as another, *Pf. lxii. 8.* Trust in him at all times. Can we trust God, 1. In our straits? when the fig-tree doth not flourish, when our earthly crutches are broken, can we now lean upon God's promise? when the pipes are cut off that use to bring us comfort, can we live upon God, in whom are all our fresh springs? when we have no bread to eat but the bread of carefulness, *Ezek. xix. 8.* when we have no water to drink unless tears, *Pf. lxxx. 5.* Thou givest them tears to drink in great measure; can we now trust in God's providence, to make supply for us? a good Christian believes, that if God feed the ravens, he will feed his children: he lives upon God's all-sufficiency, not only for grace, but food: he believes if God will give him heaven, he will daily bread: he trusts God's bond, *Pf. xxxvii. 3.* Verily thou shalt be fed. 2. Can we trust God in our fears? fear is the ague of the soul. When adversaries begin to grow high, can we now display the banner of faith? *Pf. lvi. 3.* What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Faith cures the trembling at the heart: faith gets above fear, as the oil swims above the water. This is to trust in God, and it is to make him to be a God to us.

7. To make God to be a God to us, is to love him; in the godly, fear and love kiss each other.

8. To make him a God to us, is to obey him: but I forbear to speak of these, because I shall be large upon them in the second commandment; *Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*

Qu. 2. Why must we cleave to the Lord as our God?

Ans. 1. From the equity of it: it is but equal we should cleave to him as our God, from whom we receive our being: who can have a better right to us than he that gives us our breath? *Pf. c. 3.* For it is he that made us, and not we ourselves. It is unequal, yea ungrateful, to give away our love or worship to any but God.

2. From the utility. If we cleave to the Lord as our God; then (1.) He will bless us, *Pf. lxvii. 6.* God, even our own God, will bless us. He will bless us, 1. In our estate, *Deut. xxviii. 4.* Blessed shall be the fruit of thy ground; blessed shall be thy basket and thy store:

*store*: we shall not only have our sack full of corn, but it shall be blessed: here is money in the mouth of the sack. (2.) He will bless us with peace, *Pf. xxix. 11. The Lord will bless his people with peace*: outward peace, which is the nurse of plenty, *Pf. cxlvii. 14. He maketh peace in thy borders*: inward peace, a smiling conscience; this is sweeter than the dropping honey. (2.) God will turn all evils to our good, *Rom. viii. 28. He will make a treakle of poison. Joseph's imprisonment* was a means for his advancement, *Gen. 1. 20. Out of the bitterest drug, God will distil his glory and our salvation. In short, God will be our guide to death, our comfort in death, our reward after death. So then the utility of it may make us cleave to the Lord as our God, Pf. cxliv. 15. Happy is that people who have the Lord for their God.*

3. From the necessity. 1<sup>st</sup>. If God be not our God, he will curse our blessings; *Mal. ii. 2. and God's curse blasts wherever it comes. 2dly, If God be not our God, we have none to help us in misery: will God help his enemies? will he assist them who disclaim him. 3dly, If we do not make God to be our God, he will make himself to be our judge; and, if he condemns, there is no appealing to a higher court. So that there is a necessity of having God for our God, unless we intend to be eternally espoused to misery.*

*Use 1. If we must have one God, and the Lord Jehovah for our God, it condemns the Atheists who have no God, Pf. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. There is no God he believes in, or worships: such Atheists were Diagoras and Theodorus. When Seneca had reproved Nero for his impieties, saith Nero, Dost thou think I believe there is any God, when I do such things? The duke of Silesia was so infatuated, that he affirmed, Neque inferos, neque superos esse; that there was neither God nor devil. We may see God in the works of his fingers. The creation is a great volume, in which we may read a God-head; and he must needs put out his own eyes that denies a God. Aristotle, tho' an heathen,*

did not only acknowledge God, when he cried out, *Thou Being of Beings, have mercy on me*; but he thought, he that did not confess a Deity was not worthy to live. They who will not believe a God, shall feel him, *Heb. x. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

*Use 2. It condemns Christians, who profess to own God for their God, yet they do not live as if he were their God. (1.) They do not believe in him as a God: when they look upon their sins, they are apt to say, can God pardon? when they look upon their wants, can God provide? can he prepare a table in the wilderness? (2.) They do not love him as a God; they do not give him the cream of their love, but are apt to love other things more than God: they say, they love God, but will part with nothing for him. (3.) They do not worship him as a God: they do not give him that reverence, nor pray with that devotion, as if they were praying to a God. How dead are their hearts? if not dead in sin, yet dead in duty: 'tis as if praying to a God that hath eyes, and sees not; ears, and hears not: in hearing the word, how much distraction, what regardless hearts have many? they are thinking of their shop and drugs. Would a king take it well at our hands, if, when he is speaking to us, we should be playing with a feather? when God is speaking to us in his word, and our hearts are taken up with thoughts about the world, is not this playing with a feather? O how may this humble most of us, we do not make God to be a God to us! We do not believe in him, love him, worship him as a God. Many heathens have worshipped their false gods with more seriousness and devotion, than some Christians do the true God. O let us chide ourselves: did I say, chide? let us abhor ourselves for our deadness and formality in religion, how we have professed God, yet we have not worshipped him as God. So much for the first, *We must have God for our God. I should come to the second, We must have no other god.**

EXOD. XX. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me, &c.*

1. **T**HAT we must have no other god: *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

*Qu. What is meant by this word, Before me?*  
*Ans. That is, before my face; in conspectu meo, in my sight, Deut. xxvii. 15. Cursed be*  
 E e 2 *he*



*be that makes a graven image, and puts it in a secret place.* Some would not bow to the idol that others might see, but they would secretly bow to it : but tho' this was out of man's sight, it was not out of God's sight : *Cursed therefore (saith God) be he who puts the image in a secret place. Thou shalt have no other gods.* 1. There is really no other God. 2. We must have no other.

(1.) *There is really no other God.* The *Valentinians* held there were two Gods ; the *Polytheites* that there were many ; the *Persians* worshipped the sun ; the *Egyptians* the ox and elephant ; the *Grecians* *Jupiter* : but there is no other than the true God, *Deut. iv. 39. Know therefore, this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath ; there is no other.* For, 1. There is but one *First Cause*, that hath its being of itself, and on which all other beings depend : as in the heavens the *Primum Mobile* moves all the other orbs, so God is the *Great Mover*, he gives life and motion to every thing existent.

2. There is but one *Omnipotent Power*. If there be two Omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two ; that which one would do, the other Power, being equal, would oppose : and so all things would be brought into a confusion. If a ship should have two pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other ; when one would sail, the other would cast anchor : here were a confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument there is but one Omnipotent, one God that rules all, *Isa. xlv. 6. I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God.*

(3.) *We must have no other god.* *Thou shalt have no other gods before me* : this commandment forbids, (1.) Serving a false god, and not the true, *Jer. ii. 27. Saying to a stock, thou art my father ; and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth.* Or, (2.) Joining a false God with a true, *2 Kings xvii. 33. They feared the Lord, and served their own gods* : both these are forbidden in the commandment ; we must adhere to the true God, and no other ? *God is a jealous God*, and he will endure no rival. A wife cannot lawfully have two husbands\* at once ; nor may we have two Gods, *Exod. xxxiv. 14. Thou shalt worship no other god, for the Lord*

*is a jealous God.* *Pf. xvi. 4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.* The Lord interprets it a *Forsaking of him*, to espouse any other god, *Judges ii. 12. They forsook the Lord, and followed other gods.* God would not have his people so much as make mention of other idol-gods, *Exod. xxxiii. 13. Make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.* God looks upon it as a breaking of the marriage-covenant, to go after other gods. Therefore, when *Israel* committed idolatry with the golden calf, God disclaims his interest in them, *Exod. xxxii. 7. Thy people have corrupted themselves.* Before, God called *Israel* his people ; but when they went after other gods, *Now* (saith the Lord to *Moses*) *they are no more my people, but thy people.* *Hos. ii. 2. Plead with your mother, plead ; for she is not my wife. She doth not keep faith with me ; she hath stained herself with idols, therefore I will divorce her ; she is not my wife.* To go after other gods, is what God cannot bear ; it makes the fury rise up in his face, *Deut. xiii. 6. 8, 9. If thy brother, or thy son, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods : thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shall thy eye pity him. But thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.*

*Qu. But what is it to have other gods besides the true God ? I fear, upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.*

*Ans.* To trust in any thing more than God, is to make it a god. 1. If we trust in our riches, then we make riches our god : we may take comfort, not put confidence in them. It is a foolish thing to trust in them. (1.) They are deceitful riches, *Matth. xiii. 22.* and it is foolish to trust to that which will deceive us. 1<sup>st</sup>. They have no solid consistency, they are like landships or golden dreams, which leave the soul empty when it awakes or comes to itself. 2<sup>ly</sup>. They are not what they promise ; they promise to satisfy our desires, and they increase them ; they promise to stay with us, and they take wings. (2.) They are hurtful, *Eccl. v. 13. Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.* It is foolish to trust to that which will hurt one : who would take hold of the edge of a razor to help him ? they are oft  
squel

fuel for pride and lust, *Ezek. xxviii. 5. Jer. v. 7.* So that it is folly to trust in our riches; but some do, and so make money their god, *Prov. x. 15. The rich man's wealth is his strong tower.* He makes the wedge of gold his hope, *Job xxxi. 24.* God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth. Money is his creator, redeemer, comforter: his creator; if he had money, now he thinks he is made: his redeemer; if he be in danger, he trusts to his money to redeem him: his comforter; if he be sad, money is the golden harp to drive away the evil spirit. Thus, by trusting in money, we make it a god.

2. If we trust in the arm of flesh, we make it a god, *Jer. xvii. 4. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.* The Syrians trusted in their army, which was so numerous, that it filled the country, *1 Kings xx. 27.* but this arm of flesh withered, *verse 29.* What we make our trust, God makes our shame. The sheep run to the hedges for shelter, and they lose their wool: we have run to second causes to help us, and we have lost much of our golden fleece; they have not only been reeds to fail us, but thorns to prick us. We have broken our parliament-crutches, by leaning too hard upon them.

3. If we trust in our wisdom, we make it a god, *Jer. ix. 23. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.* Glorifying is the height of confidence. Many a man doth make an idol of his wit and parts; he deifies himself; but how oft doth God take the wise in their own craftiness, *Job vi. 13. Achitophel* had a great wit, his counsel was as the oracle of God; but his wit brought him to the halter, *2 Sam. xvii. 23.*

4. If we trust in our civility, we make it a god: many trust to this, none can charge them with gross sin. Civility is but nature refined and cultivated: a man may be washed, and not changed; his life may be civil, yet there may be some reigning sin in his heart: the Pharisee could say, *I am no adulterer*, *Luke xviii. 11.* but he could not say, *I am not proud.* To trust to civility, is to trust to a spider's web.

5. If we trust to our duties to save us, we make them a god, *Isa. lxiii. 6. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags:* they are fly-blown with sin. Put gold in the fire, and there comes out much dross; our most golden duties are mixed with infirmity: we are apt either to neglect duty, or idolize it. Use duty,

but do not trust to it; for then you make it a god. Trust not to your praying and hearing; these are means of salvation, but they are not saviours. If you make duties bladders to trust to, you may sink to hell with these bladders.

6. If we trust in our grace, we make a god of it. Grace is but a creature; if we trust to it, we make it an idol. Grace is imperfect, we cannot trust to that to save us which is imperfect, *Pf. xxvi. 1. I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord.* David did walk in his integrity; but did not trust in his integrity; *I have trusted in the Lord.* If we trust in our graces, we make a Christ of them. They are good graces, but bad Christs. To love any thing more than God, is to make it a god.

1st, If we love our estate more than God, then we make it a god. The young man in the gospel loved his gold better than his Saviour; the world lay nearer his heart than Christ, *Matth. xix. 22. Fulgens hoc aurum præstringit oculos*, Var. Hence it is, the covetous man is called an idolater, *Eph. v. 5.* Why so? Because he loves his estate more than God, and so he makes it his god; tho' he doth not bow down to an idol, yet he worships the graven image in his coins; he is an idolater. That which hath most of the heart, that we make a god.

2ly, If we love our pleasures more than God, we make a god of pleasure, *2 Tim. iii. 4. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.* Many let loose the reins, and give themselves up to all manner of sensual delights; they idolize pleasure, *Job xxi. 12, 13. They take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in mirth.* I have read of a place in *Africa*, where the people spend all their time in dancing, and making merry: and have not we many who make a god of pleasure, who spend their time in going to plays, and visiting stews, as if God had made them like the leviathan, to play in the water? *Pf. civ. 26.* In the country of *Sardinia* there is an herb like balm, that if one eat too much of it, he will die laughing: such an herb is pleasure; if one feeds immoderately on it, he will go laughing to hell. Such as make a god of pleasure, let them read but two scriptures, *Ecc. vii. 4. The heart of fools is in the house of mirth.* And *Rev. xviii. 7. How much she hath lived deliciously, so much shall she be tormented.* Sugar laid in a dangerous way.



to all the sugared joys and pleasures of sinners, will turn to the water of tears at last.

3ly, If we love our belly more than God, we make a god of it, *Phil. iii. 19. Whose god is their belly.* *Clemens Alexandrinus* writes of a fish that had its heart in its belly: an emblem of epicures, their heart is in their belly; they do *sacrificare lari*, their belly is their god, and to this god they pour drink-offerings. The Lord allows what is fitting for the recruit of nature, *Deut. xi. 15. I will send grass, that thou mayst eat and be full.* But, to mind nothing but the indulging of the appetite, is idolatry; *Whose god is their belly.* What pity is it, that the soul, that princely part, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is a-kin to angels, should be enslaved to the brutish part.

4ly, If we love a child more than God, we make a god of it. How many are guilty in this kind! they think of their children, and delight more in them than God; they grieve more for the loss of their first-born, than for the loss of their first love. This is to make an idol of a child, and to set it in God's room. Thus God is oft provoked to take away our children: if we love the jewel more than him that gave it, God will take away the jewel, that our love may return to him again.

*Use 1.* It reproves such as have other gods, and so renounce the true God. (1.) Such as set up idols, *Jer. ii. 28. According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Israel.* *Hos. xii. 11. Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field.* (2.) Such as seek to familiar spirits. This is a sin condemned by the law of God, *Deut. xviii. 11. There shall not be found among you any that consult with familiar spirits.* It is ordinary, that if people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizards and soothsayers, to know how they may come by their goods again: what is this but for people to make a god of the devil, by consulting with him, and putting their trust in him? what? because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too? *2 Kings i. 6.* So, is it not because you think there is not a god in heaven, that you ask counsel of the devil? If any be guilty, be humbled.

*Use 2.* It sounds a retreat in our ears. Let it call us off from the idolizing any creature; and renouncing other gods, let us cleave to the true God and his service. If we go away from God, we know not where to mend ourselves.

1. It is honourable serving of the true God: *Servire Deo est regnare.* It is more honour to serve God, than to have kings serve us. 2. Serving the true God is delightful, *Isa. lvi. 7. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.* God oft displays the banner of his love in an ordinance, and pours in the oil of gladness into the heart. All God's ways are pleasantness, his paths are strewed with roses, *Prov. iii. 17.* 3. Serving the true God is beneficial; they have great gain here, the hidden manna, inward peace, and a great reward to come: they that serve God shall have a kingdom when they die, *Luke xii. 32.* and shall wear a crown made of the flowers of paradise, *1 Pet. v. 4.* To serve the true God is our true interest. God hath twisted his glory and our salvation together: he bids us believe; and why? that we may be saved. Therefore, renouncing all others, let us cleave to the true God.

2. You have covenanted to serve the true Jehovah, renouncing all others. When one hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are drawn and sealed, then he cannot go back, but must serve out his time. We have covenanted in baptism, to take the Lord for our God, renouncing all others; and renewed this covenant in the Lord's supper, and shall we not keep our solemn vow and covenant? we cannot go away from God without the highest perjury, *Heb. x. 38. If any man draw back, as a soldier that steals away from his colours, my soul shall have no pleasure in him: I will pour vials of wrath on him, make mine arrows drunk with blood.*

3. None ever had cause to repent of cleaving to God and his service: some have repented that they have made a god of the world. Cardinal Woolsey said, *Had I served God as faithfully as I have served my king, he would never have left me thus.* None ever complained of serving God, it was both their comfort and crown on death-bed.

## OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c.*

**I**N the first commandment is forbidden the worshipping a false god; in this, the worshipping the true God in a false manner.

1. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.* This forbids not the making an image for civil use, *Matth. xxii. 20. Whose is the image and superscription? They say unto him, It is Cesar's.* But the commandment forbids setting up an image for religious use or worship.

2. *Nor the likeness of any thing, &c.* All ideas, portraitures, shapes, images of God, whether by effigies or pictures, are here forbidden, *Deut. iv. 15. Take heed lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make the similitude of any figure.* God is to be adored in the heart, not painted to the eye.

3. *Thou shalt not bow down to them.* The intent of making images and pictures, is to worship them. No sooner was *Nebuchadnezzar's* golden image set up, but all the people fell down and worshipped it, *Dan. iii. 7.* Therefore God forbids the prostrating of ourselves before an idol: so then, the thing prohibited in this commandment is image-worship. To set up an image to represent God, is a debasing of the Deity, 'tis below God. If one should make images of snakes or spiders, saying he did it to represent his prince, would not the prince take this in high disdain? what greater disparagement to God, than to represent the infinite God by that which is finite; the living God, by that which is without life, and the Maker of all, by a thing which is made?

1. To make a true image of God is impossible. God is a spiritual essence, *John iv. 24.* and, being a Spirit, he is invisible, *Deut. iv. 15. Ye saw no similitude in the day that the Lord spake with you out of the midst of the fire.* How can any paint the Deity? can they make an image of that which they never saw? *Quod invisibile est, pingi non potest,* Ambros. *Ye saw no similitude.* It is impossible to make a picture of the soul, or to paint the angels, because they are of a spiritual nature; much less then can we paint God by an image, who is an infinite, increate Spirit.

2. To worship God by an image, is both absurd and unlawful.

I. It is absurd and irrational; for, 1. The workman is better than the work, *Heb. iii. 3. He who buildeth the house hath more honour than the house.* If the workman be better than the work, and none bows to the workman, how absurd then is it to bow to the work of his hands? 2. Is it not an absurd thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king himself is present? so to bow down to an image of God, when God himself is every-where present.

II. It is unlawful to worship God by an image; for, 1. It is against the homily of the church; it runs thus; *The images of God, our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, are of all others the most dangerous; therefore the greatest care ought to be had, that they stand not in temples and churches.* So that image-worship is contrary to our own homilies, and doth affront the authority of the church of England. 2. Image-worship is expressly against the letter of scripture, *Lev. xxvi. 1. Ye shall make no graven image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone, to bow down to it.* *Deut. xvi. 22. Neither shalt thou set up any image which the Lord thy God hateth.* *Pf. xcvi. 7. Confounded be all they that serve graven images.* Do we think to please God, by doing that which is contrary to his mind, and that which he hath expressly forbidden? 3. Image-worship is against the practice of the saints of old. *Josiah*, that renowned king, destroyed the groves and images, *2 Kings xxiii. 24.* *Constantine* abrogated the images set-up in temples: the Christians destroyed images at *Basil*, *Zurick*, *Bohemia*; when the Roman emperors would have thrust images upon them, they chose rather to die than desflower their virgin-profession by idolatry; they refused to admit any painter or carver into their society, because they would not have any carved statue or image of God: when *Seraphion* bowed to an idol, the Christians excommunicated him, and delivered him up to Satan.

Use 1. It reproves and condemns the church of



of Rome, who, from the *Alpha* of their religion to the *Omega*, are wholly idolatrous. They make images of God the Father, painting them in their church windows as an old man; and an image of Christ in the crucifix: and, because it is against the letter of this commandment, therefore they sacrilegiously blot out the second commandment out of their catechises, dividing the tenth commandment into two. Now this image-worship must needs be very impious and blasphemous, because it is a giving that religious worship to the creature, which is only due to God. It is vain for papists to say, they give God the worship of the heart, and the image only the worship of the body; for the worship of the body is due to God, as well as the worship of the heart: and to give an outward veneration to an image, is to give that adoration to a creature, which only belongs to God, *Isa.* xlii. 8. *My glory will I not give to another.*

Obj. 1. *But the papists say, they do not worship the image, only make use of it as a medium, they worship God by it; Ne imagini quidem Christi in quantum est lignum sculptum, ultra debetur reverentia, Aquinas.*

Ans. 1. Where hath God bidden them worship him by an effigies or spirit? *Isa.* i. 12. *Who hath required this at your hands?* The papists cannot say so much as the devil, *Scriptum est*, It is written.

2. The heathens may bring the same argument for their gross idolatry, as the papists do for their image-worship. Who of the heathens were so simple, as to think gold and silver, or the figure of an ox or elephant, were God? They were only emblems and hieroglyphicks to represent him; they did worship the invisible God, by such visible things. To worship God by an image, God takes as done to the image itself.

Obj. 2. *But, say the papists, images are laymen's books, and they are good to put us in mind of God. One of the popish councils affirmed, that we might learn more by an image, than by long study of the scriptures.*

Ans. Hab. ii. 18. *What profiteth the graven image, the molten image, and a teacher of lies?* Is an image a lay-man's book? see then what lessons this book teacheth, it teacheth lies; it represents God in a visible shape, who is invisible. For the papists to say, they make use of an image, to put them in mind of God, is as if a woman should say, she keeps company

with another man, to put her in mind of her husband.

Obj. 3. *But did not Moses make the image of a brazen serpent? Why then may not images be set up?*

Ans. That was done by God's special command, *Numb.* xxi. 8. *Make thee a brazen serpent; and there was a special use of it, both literal and spiritual; but what, doth the setting up this image of the brazen serpent justify the setting up of images in churches? what, because Moses did make an image by God's appointment, may we therefore set up an image of our own devising? because Moses made an image to heal them that were stung, is it lawful therefore to set up images in churches, to sting them that are whole? this doth not at all follow. Nay, that very brazen serpent which God himself commanded to be set up, when Israel did look upon it with too much reverence, and began to burn incense to it, Hezekiah defaced that image, and called it *Hehushtan*; and God commended him for doing so, *2 Kings* xviii. 4.*

Obj. 4. *But is not God represented as having hands, and eyes, and ears? Why then may we not make an image to represent him by, and help our devotion?*

Ans. Tho' God is pleased to stoop to our weak capacities, and set himself out in scripture by eyes, to signify his omniscieny; and hands, to signify his power; yet, it is very absurd, from metaphors and figurative expressions, to bring an argument for images and pictures; for, by that rule, God may be pictured by the sun and the element of fire, and by a rock; for God is set forth by these metaphors in scripture: and sure the papists themselves would not like to have such images made of God.

Qu. 1. *If it be not lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an image of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man?*

Ans. No. Epiphanius seeing an image of Christ hanging in a church, brake it in pieces. 'Tis Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood, that makes him to be Christ: therefore, to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half-Christ, we separate what God hath joined, we leave out that which is the chief thing, which makes him to be Christ.

Qu. 2. *But how then shall we conceive of God*

God aright, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?

*Ans.* We must conceive of God spiritually, viz. 1. In his attributes, his holiness, justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. 2. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ, Christ is the image of the invisible God, Col. i. 15. as in the wax we see the print of the seal. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ-God-Man, John xiv. 9. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

*Use 2.* Take heed of idolatry, viz. image-worship: our nature is prone to this sin, as dry wood to take fire; and indeed, what needs so many words in the commandment, *Thou shalt not make any graven image, or the likeness of any thing in heaven, earth, water, sun, moon, stars, male, female, fish; thou shalt not bow down to them: I say, what needed so many words, but to shew how subject we are to this sin of false worship? it concerns us therefore to resist this sin. When the tide is apt to run with greater force, there we need to make the banks higher and stronger; the plague of idolatry is very infectious, Ps. cvi. 35, 36. They were mingled among the heathens, and served their idols.* It is my advice to you to avoid all occasions of this sin.

1. Come not into the company of idolatrous papists, dare not to live under the same roof with them: you run into the devil's mouth. John the divine would not be in the bath where Cerinthus the heretic was.

2. Go not into their chapels to see their crucifixes, or hear mass: as the looking on an harlot draws to adultery, so the looking on the popish gilded picture may draw to idolatry. Some care not tho' they go and see their idol-worship: indeed, a vagrant that hath nothing to lose, cares not tho' he goes among thieves; such as have no goodness in them, are not into what idolatrous places they come, or what temptations they cast themselves upon: but you who have a treasure about you, good principles, take heed the popish priests do not rob you of your principles, and defile you with their images.

3. Dare not to joyn in marriage with image-worshippers. Solomon, tho' a man of wisdom, yet his idolatrous wives drew away his heart from God. The people of Israel entered into an oath and curse, that they would not give their daughters in marriage to the idolaters,

Nehem. x. 30. For a protestant and papist to marry, is to be unequally yoked, 2 Cor. vi. 14. and there is more danger that the papist will corrupt the protestant, than hope that the protestant will convert the papist. Mingle wine and vinegar, the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar.

4. Avoid superstition, which is a bridge leads over to Rome. Superstition is the bringing in any ceremony, fancy, or innovation into God's worship, which he never appointed. This is very provoking to God, because it reflects much upon his honour, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner of his own worship. God hates all strange fire to be offered in his temple, Lev. x. 1. A ceremony may in time bring to a crucifix. They who contend for the cross in baptism, why may they not as well have the oil, salt, and cream, the one being as ancient as the other? such as are for altar-worship, they who will bow to the east, may in time bow to the host. Take heed of all occasions of idolatry; idolatry is devil-worship, Ps. cvi. 37. and if you search thro' the whole bible, there is no one sin that God hath more followed with plagues, than idolatry; the Jews have a saying, that in every evil that befalls them, there is *uncia aurei vituli*, an ounce of the golden calf in it. Hell is a place for idolaters, Rev. xxii. 15. *For without are idolaters.* Senesius calls the devil a rejoicer at idols, because the image-worshippers help to fill hell. That you may be preserved from idolatry and image-worship,

1. Get good principles, that you may be able to oppose the gainfayer. Whence doth the popish religion get ground? not from the goodness of their cause, but from the ignorance of their people.

2. Get love to God. The wife that loves her husband is safe from the adulterer; and the soul that loves Christ is safe from the idolater.

3. Pray that God will keep you. Tho' it is true, there is nothing in an image to tempt (for if we pray to an image it cannot hear, and if we pray to God by an image, he will not hear: I say, there's nothing to tempt) yet we know not our own hearts, or how soon we may be drawn to vanity, if God leave us; therefore pray that you be not enticed by false worship, or receive the mark of the beast in your right-hand or forehead. Pray, Ps. cxix. 117. *Hold thou me*



up, and I shall be safe. Lord, let me neither mistake my way for want of light, nor leave the true way for want of courage.

2. Let us bless God, who hath given us the knowledge of his truth; that we have tasted the honey of his word, and our eyes are enlightened. Bless him that he hath shewn us the pattern of his house, the right mode of

worship; that he hath discovered to us the forgery and blasphemy of the *Romish* religion. Let us pray, that God will preserve pure ordinances, and powerful preaching among us: idolatry came in at first by the want of good preaching; then the people began to have golden images, when they had wooden priests.

EXOD. XX. 5. *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me.*

I. **I** The Lord thy God am a jealous God.] The first reason why *Israel* must not worship graven images, is, because the Lord is a jealous God, *Exod. xxxiv. 14. The Lord, whose name is JEHOVAH, is a jealous God.* Jealously is taken in a good sense, and so God is jealous for his people. 2. In a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people.

1. In a good sense, and so God is jealous for his people, *Zech. i. 14. Thus saith the Lord, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy.* God hath a dear affection for his people, they are his *Hephzibah*, or delight, *Isa. lxii. 5. The apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8.* To express how dear they are to him, and how tender he is of them, *Nilil carius pupilla oculi*, *Drusus*. They are his spouse, adorned with jewels of grace; they ly near to his heart. He is jealous for his spouse, therefore he will be avenged on them who go to wrong her, *Isa. xlii. 13. The Lord shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall roar, he shall prevail against his enemies.* What is done to the saints, God takes as done to himself, *2 Kings xix. 22.* and the Lord will undo all them that afflict Zion, *Zeph. iii. 19. I will undo all that afflict thee.* 2. Jealousy is taken in a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people; and so it is taken in this commandment, *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* I am jealous lest you should go after false gods, or worship the true God in a false manner; lest you defile your virgin-profession by images. God will have his spouse to keep close to him, and not go after other lovers, *Hos. iii. 3. Thou shalt not be for another man.* God cannot bear a corival: our conjugal love, viz. a love joined with adoration and worship, must be given only to God.

Use 1. Let us give God no just cause to be jealous. A good wife will be so discreet and

chast, as to give her husband no just occasion of jealousy. Let us avoid all sin, especially the sin of idolatry, or image-worship; it is heinous, after we have entered into a marriage-covenant with God, now to prostitute ourselves to an image. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, and God is a jealous God, he will avenge it: image-worship makes God abhor a people, *Pf. lxxviii. 58. They moved him to jealousy with their graven images.* When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred *Israel*. Image-worship enrageth God, *Prov. vi. 34. Jealousy is the rage of a man; it makes God divorce a people, Hos. ii. 2. Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife. Cant. viii. 6. Jealousy is cruel as the grave.* As the grave devours men's bodies, so God will devour image-worshippers.

Use 2. If God be a jealous God, let it be a word to such whose friends are popish idolaters, and they are hated by their friends, because they are of a different religion, and perhaps they cut off their maintenance from them. O remember, God is a jealous God; better move your parents to hatred, than move God to jealousy: their anger cannot do you so much hurt as God's; if they will not provide for you, God will, *Pf. xxvii. 10. When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

II. The second reason against image-worship, *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*] There is a twofold visiting. 1. There is God's visiting in mercy, *Gen. i. 25. God will surely visit you;* that is, he will bring you into the land of *Canaan*, the type of heaven. Thus God hath visited us with the sun-beams of his favour; he hath made us swim in a sea of mercy: this is an happy visitation. 2. There is God's visiting in anger, *Jer. v. 9. Shall*

*Shall I not visit for these things?* that is, God's visiting with the rod: and, *Iſa. x. 3. What will ye do in the day of visitation?* that is, in the day when God shall visit with his judgment. Thus God's visiting is taken here, in this commandment, *visiting iniquity*, that is, punishing iniquity. Observe here three things.

*Observ. 1.* That sin makes God visit; *Visiting iniquity*. Sin is the cause why God visits with sickness, poverty, *Pſ. lxxxix. 31, 32. If they break my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod.* Sin twists the cords which pinch us; sin creates all our troubles, it is the gall in our cup, and the gravel in our bread; *Flagitium & flagellum, sunt sicut acus & filum.* Sin is the Trojan horse, the Phaeton, that sets all on fire; it is the womb of our sorrows, and grave of our comfort. God visits for sin.

*Observ. 2.* One special sin God visits for, is idolatry and image-worship. *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers.* Most of God's invincible arrows have been shot among idolaters, *Jer. vii. 12. Go now into my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it.* God, for Israel's idolatry, suffered their army to be routed, their priests slain, the ark taken captive; and we never read that the ark returned to Shiloh any more. *Jerusalem* was the most famous metropolis of the world; there was the temple, *Pſ. cxxii. 4. Whither the tribes go up the tribes of the Lord.* Yet, for their high places and images, their city was besieged and taken by the Chaldean forces, *2 Kings xxv. 4.* When images were set up in *Constantinople*, the chief seat of the Eastern empire; this city, which was in the eye of the world impregnable, was taken by the Turks, and many cruelly massacred. Then the Turks, in their triumphs, reproached the idolatrous Christians, causing an image or crucifix to be carried through the streets in contempt, and throwing dirt upon it, cried, *This is the god of the Christians.* Here was God's visitation for their idolatry. God hath set special marks of his wrath upon idolaters: at a place called *E-poletium*, there perished by an earthquake 350 persons, while they were offering sacrifice to idols. Idolatry hath brought misery upon the Eastern churches, it removed the golden candlesticks of *Asia*. This iniquity God visits for.

*Observ. 3.* Idolatrous persons are enemies not only to their own souls, but to their children:

*Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.* As an idolatrous father entails his land of inheritance, so he entails God's anger and curse upon them. A jealous husband, finding his wife hath stained her integrity, may justly cast off her and her children too, because they are none of his. If the father be a traitor to his prince, no wonder if all the children suffer. God may visit the iniquity of image-worshippers upon their children.

*Qu. But is it not said, Every one shall die for his own sin; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father? How then doth God say, He will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children?*

*Ans.* Tho' the son be not damned for his father's sin, yet he may be severely punished, *Job xxi. 19. God lays up his iniquity for his children;* that is, God lays up the punishment of his iniquity for his children; the child smarts for the father's sin. *Jeroboam* thought to have established the kingdom by idolatrous worship, but it brought ruin upon him, and all his posterity, *1 Kings xiv. 10. Ahab's idolatry wronged his posterity, they lost the kingdom, and were all beheaded, 2 Kings x. 7. They took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons.* There God visited the iniquity of the father upon the children. As a son catcheth an hereditary disease from his father, the stone or gout; so he catcheth misery from him, his father's sin ruins him.

*Use 1.* If so, then how sad is it to be the child of an idolater? It had been sad to have been one of *Gehazi's* children, who had leprosy entailed upon them, *2 Kings v. 27. The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee, and to thy seed for ever.* So it is sad to be a child of an idolater, or image-worshipper: his seed are exposed to God's heavy judgments in this life; *God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.* Methinks I hear God speak, as, *Iſa. xiv. 21. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers.*

*Use 2.* See what a privilege it is to be the children of good parents; the parents are in covenant with God, and God lays up mercy for their posterity, *Prov. xx. 7. The just man walks in his integrity, his seed are blessed after him.* A religious parent doth not procure wrath, but helps to keep off wrath from his child; he seasons his child with religious principles, he prays down a blessing on his child: he is a loadstone drawing his child to Christ by good counsel and example. O what a privilege is it to be



born of godly religious parents! St. *Austin* saith, that his mother *Monica* travelled with greater care and pains for his new birth, than for his natural. Wicked idolaters entail misery on their posterity. God *visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children*: but religious parents procure a blessing upon their children, God reserves mercy upon their posterity.

III. The third reason against image-worship, *Of them that hate me.*] This is a reason against image-worship, 'tis hating God; the papists, who worship God by an image, hate God. Image-worship is a pretended love to God, but God interprets it an hating of him: *Quæ diligit alienum odit sponsum*; She that loves another man, hates her own husband. An image-lover is a God-hater. Idolaters are said to go a-whoring from God, *Ezek. xxxiv. 15.* How can they love God? I shall shew that image-worshippers hate God, whatever love they pretend.

1. They who go contrary to God's express will, hate him. God saith, you shall not set up any statue, image, picture, to represent me; these things I hate, *Deut. xvi. 22* *Neither shalt thou set up any image which the Lord thy God hateth.* Yet the idolater will set up images, and worship them. This God looks upon as an hating of him. How doth that child love his father, who doth all he can to cross him?

2. They who shut the truth out of doors, hate God, *Jephtha* proves that his brethren did hate him, because they laboured to shut him out of his father's house, *Judges xi. 7.* The idolater shuts the truth out of doors; he blots out the second commandment; he makes a shape of the invisible God; he brings a lie into God's worship: which is a clear proof he hates God.

3. Idolaters, tho' they love the false image of God in a picture, yet they hate the true image of God in a believer: they pretend to honour

Christ in a crucifix, yet persecute Christ in his members: these hate God.

*Use 1.* This may confute those who plead for image-worshippers. They are very devout people, they adore images, they set up the crucifix, kiss it, light candles to it: they love God. Nay, but who shall be judge of their love? God saith, they hate him: they give religious adoration to a creature. These hate God, and God hates them; and they shall never live with God, whom God hates: he will never lay such vipers in his bosom; heaven is kept as paradise, with a flaming sword, that they shall not enter in: and *Deut. vii. 10.* *He repayeth them that hate him, to their face.* God will shoot all his murdering-pieces among idolaters; all the plagues and curses in the book of God shall befall the idolater: the Lord repays him that hates him, to his face.

*Use 2.* Let it exhort us all to flee from *Romish* idolatry: let us not be among God-haters, *1 John v. 21.* *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.* As you would keep your bodies from adultery, so keep your souls from idolatry. Take heed of images, they are images of jealousy to provoke God to anger: they are damnable: you may as well perish by false devotion, as by real scandal; by image-worship, as drunkenness and whoredom. A man may as well die by poison, as pistol: we may as well go to hell by drinking poison in the *Romish* cup of fornication, as by being piqued with gross and scandalous sins. To conclude, *God is a jealous God*, no corniver; he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon their children: he will entail a plague upon the posterity of idolaters. He interprets idolaters to be such as hate him; he that is an image-lover, is a God-hater: Therefore keep yourselves pure from *Romish* idolatry; if you love your souls, keep yourselves from idols.

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Exod. xx. 6. *Shewing Mercy unto Thousands, &c.*

**T**HIS is another argument against image-worship, because such as do not provoke God with their images, he is merciful to them, and will entail mercy upon their posterity; *shewing mercy to thousands.*

1. Here is the golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed. 2. The persons interested in God's mercy; such as love him, and keep his com-

mandments. 1. The golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed, *shewing mercy to thousands.* The heathens thought they praised *Jupiter* enough, when they called him *good and great.* Both these excellencies meet in God, *majesty and mercy.* Mercy is that innate propenseness in God to do good to distressed sinners. God shewing mercy, makes his Godhead appear full

of glory. When *Moses* said to God, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory; I will* (saith God) *shew mercy*, *Exod. xxxiii. 19.* His mercy is his glory. Mercy is the name by which God will be known, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord passed by, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious.* Mercy proceeds primarily, and originally from God; he is called the *Father of mercies*, *2 Cor. i. 3.* because he begets all those mercies and bowels which are in the creature. Our mercies compared with God's, are scarce so much as the drop to the ocean.

Qu. *What are the qualifications?*

Ans. 1. The spring of mercy which God shews, is free and spontaneous. To set up merit is to destroy mercy: nothing can deserve mercy or force it; we cannot deserve mercy, because of our enmity, nor force it; we may force God to punish us, not to love us, *Hos. xiv. 4. I will love them freely.* Every link in the golden chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free, *Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us in him according to the good pleasure of his will.* Justification is free, *Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace.* Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free. If God should shew mercy only to such as deserve it, he must shew mercy to none at all.

2. The mercy God shews is powerful: how powerful is that mercy which softens an heart of stone? mercy changed *Mary Magdalene's* heart, out of whom seven devils were cast: she who was an inflexible adamant, mercy made her a weeping penitent. God's mercy works sweetly, yet irresistibly; it allures, yet conquers. The law may terrify, mercy doth mollify. Of what sovereign power and efficacy is that mercy which subdues the pride and enmity of the heart, and bears off those chains of sin in which the soul is held!

3. The mercy which God shews is superabundant, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. Abundant in goodness, shewing mercy to thousands.* God visits iniquity only to the third and fourth generation, *Exod. xx. 5.* but he shews mercy to a thousand generations. The Lord hath treasures of mercy lying by, therefore he is said to be *plenteous in mercy*, *Pf. lxxxvi. 5.* and *rich in mercy*, *Eph. ii. 4.* The vial of God's wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of his mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light, as God is of love.

God hath mercy, *First*, Of all dimensions; he hath depth of mercy, it reacheth as low as

sinners; and height of mercy, it reacheth above the clouds.

*Secondly*, God hath mercies of all seasons; mercies for the night, he gives sleep; nay, sometimes he gives a song in the night, *Pf. xlii. 8.* And hath mercies for the morning, *Lam. iii. 23. His compassions are fresh every morning.*

*Thirdly*, God hath mercies for all sorts. Mercies for the poor, *1 Sam. ii. 8. He raiseth the poor out of the dust:* mercies for the prisoner, *Pf. lxix. 33. He despiseth not his prisoners:* mercies for the dejected, *Isa. liv. 8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.* God hath old mercies, *Pf. xxv. 6. Thy mercies have been ever of old:* And new mercies, *Pf. xl. 3. He hath put a new song in my mouth.* Every time we draw our breath, we suck in mercy: God hath mercies under heaven, and those we taste of; and mercies in heaven, and those we hope for. Thus God's mercies are superabundant.

4. The mercy God shews is abiding, *Pf. ciii. 16. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.* God's anger to his children lasts but a while, *Pf. ciii. 5.* but his mercy lasts for ever. God's mercy is not like the widow's oil, which ran a while, and then ceased, *2 Kings iv. 6.* Over-flowing, ever flowing. God's mercy, as it is without bounds, so without bottom, *Pf. cxxxvi. His mercy endures for ever.* God never cuts off the entail of mercy from the elect.

Qu. 2. *How many ways is God said to shew mercy?*

Ans. 1. We are all living monuments of God's mercy. God shews mercy to us in daily supplying us. 1. He supplies us with health: health is the sauce which makes our life relish sweeter. How would they prize this mercy, who are chained to a sick bed? 2. God supplies us with provisions, *Gen. xlviii. 15. The God who hath fed me all my days.* Mercy spreads our tables, it carves us every bit of bread we eat; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy.

2. God shews mercy in lengthning out our gospel-liberties. *1 Cor. xvi. 9.* There are many adversaries; many would stop the waters of the sanctuary that they should not run: we enjoy the sweet seasons of grace, we hear joyful sounds, we see the goings of God in his sanctuary, we enjoy sabbath after sabbath; the manna of the word yet falls about our tents, when



when in diverse parts of the land they have no manna. Here is God's shewing mercy to us ; he spins out our forfeited liberties.

3. God shews mercy to us, in preventing many evils from invading us, *Pf. iii. 3. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.* God hath restrained the wrath of men, and been a screen between us and danger : when the destroying angel hath been abroad, and shot his deadly arrow of pestilence, God hath kept off the arrow that it hath not come near us.

4. God shews mercy, in delivering us, *2 Tim. iv. 17. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, viz. Nero.* God hath restored us from the grave. May we not write the writing of *Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 9. When he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness ?* When we thought the sun of our life had been setting, God hath made it return to its former brightness.

5. God shews mercy, in restraining of us from sin : lusts within, are worse than lions without. The greatest sign of God's anger, is to give men up to their sins, *Pf. lxxxi. 12. So I gave them up to their own lusts ;* let them sin themselves to hell : but God hath laid the bridle of restraining grace upon us. As God said to *Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6. I withheld thee from sinning against me ;* so God withheld us from those exorbitancies which might have made us a prey to Satan, and a terror to ourselves.

6. God shews mercy, in guiding and directing us. Is it not a mercy for one that is out of the way to have a guide ? *First,* There is a providential guiding : God guides our affairs for us, chalks out a way he would have us to walk in ; he resolves our doubts, unties our knots, appoints the bounds of our habitation, *Acts xvii. 26. Secondly,* A spiritual guiding, *Pf. lxxiii. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.* As *Israel* had a pillar of fire to go before him, so God guides us with the oracles of his word, and the conduct of his spirit. He guides our head, keeps us from error ; and he guides our feet, keeps us from scandal. O what mercy is it to have God to be our guide and pilot ! *Pf. xxxi. 3. For thy name's sake lead me and guide me.*

7. God shews mercy in correcting us. God is angry in love ; he finites, that he may save. God's rod is not a rod of iron to break us, but a fatherly rod to humble us, *Heb. xii. 10. He, for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.* Either God will mortify some cor-

ruption, or exercise some grace. Is there not mercy in this ? Every cross, to a child of God, is like *Paul's* cross wind, which, tho' it broke the ship, it brought *Paul* to shore upon the broken pieces, *Acts xxvii. 44.*

8. God shews mercy in pardoning us, *Mic. vii. 18. Who is a God like thee, that pardonest iniquity ?* 'Tis mercy to feed us, rich mercy to pardon us : this mercy is spun out of the bowels of free grace ; this is enough to make a sick man well, *Isa. xxxiii. 24. The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick ; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.* Pardon of sin is a mercy of the first magnitude, God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. This made *David* put on his best clothes, and anoint himself : his child newly dead, and God had told him the sword should not depart from his house, yet now he falls anointing himself ; the reason was, God had sent him his pardon by the prophet *Nathan, 2 Sam. iii. 12, 13. The Lord hath put away thy sin.* Pardon is the only fit remedy for a troubled conscience : what can give ease to a wounded spirit, but pardoning mercy ? Offer him the honours and pleasures of the world ; 'tis as if you bring flowers and music to one that is condemned.

Qu. *How may I know my sins are pardoned ?*

Ans. Where God removes the guilt, he breaks the power of sin, *Mic. vii. 19. He will have compassion, he will subdue our iniquities.* With pardoning love God gives subduing grace.

9. God shews his mercy in sanctifying us, *Lev. xx. 8. I am the Lord that sanctify you.* This is the partaking of the divine nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* God's spirit is a spirit of consecration, tho' it sanctify us but in part, yet in every part, *1 Theff. v. 23.* This is such a mercy, that God cannot give it in anger ; if we are sanctified, then we are elected, *2 Theff. ii. 13. God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification.* This doth *disponere ad cælum* ; it prepares for happiness, as the seed prepares for harvest. When the virgins had been anointed and perfumed, then they were to stand before the king, *Esth. ii. 12.* so, when we have had the anointing of God, then we shall stand before the King of heaven.

10. God shews mercy, in hearing our prayers, *Pf. iv. 1. Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.* Is it not a favour, when a man puts up a petition to the king, and hath it granted ? when we pray for pardon, adoption, the sense of God's love, to have God give a gracious answer ;

swer; what a signal mercy is this? God may sometimes delay an answer, when he will not deny. You do not presently throw a musician money, because you love to hear his music: God loves the music of prayer, therefore doth not presently let us hear from him; but, in due season he will give an answer of peace, *Pf. lxvi. 20. Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me.* If God doth not turn away our prayer, then he doth not turn away his mercy.

11. God shews mercy in saving us, *Titus iii. 5. According to his mercy he saved us.* This is the top-stone of mercy, and is laid in heaven. Now mercy displays itself in all its orient colours; now mercy is mercy indeed, when God shall perfectly refine us from all the lees and dregs of corruption. Our bodies shall be made like Christ's glorious body, and our souls like the angels. Saving mercy is crowning mercy: 'tis not only to be freed from hell, but introned in a kingdom. In this life we do rather desire God, than enjoy him: but what rich mercy will it be to be fully possessed of God, to see his smiling face, and to have God lay us in his bosom? This will fill us with *joy unspeakable and full of glory, Pf. xvii. 15. I shall be satisfied, when I wake, with thy likeness.*

Use 1. As an argument against despair, see what a great encouragement here is to serve God; he shews mercy to thousands. Who would not be willing to serve a prince that is given to mercy and clemency? God is represented with a rainbow round about him, *Rev. iv. 3.* an emblem of his mercy. Acts of severity are rather forced from God; justice is his strange work, *Isa. xxviii. 22.* Therefore the disciples, who are not said to wonder at the other miracles of Christ, yet did wonder when the fig-tree was cursed and withered, because it was not Christ's manner to put forth acts of severity. God is said to delight in mercy, *Mic. vii. 18.* Justice is God's left-hand, mercy is his right-hand: God useth his right-hand most; he is more used to mercy than to justice, *propter est Deus ad parcendum quam ad puniendum.* God is said to be slow to anger, *Pf. ciii. 8.* but ready to forgive, *Pf. lxxxvi. 5.* This may encourage us to serve God. What argument will prevail, if mercy will not? Were God all justice, it might fright us from him, but his mercy may be a load-stone to draw us to him.

Use 2. Branch 1. Hope in God's mercies, *Pf. cxlvii. 11. The Lord takes pleasure in them*

*that fear him, and hope in his mercy.* God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons among men.

Obj. *But I have been a sinner, and sure there is no mercy for me.*

Ans. No, not if thou goest on in sin, and art so resolved; but, if thou wilt break off thy sins, the golden sceptre of mercy shall be held forth to thee, *Isa. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.* And Christ's blood is a fountain set open for sin and uncleanness, *Zech. xiii. 1.* Mercy doth more overflow in God, than sin in us; God's mercy can drown great sins, as the sea covers great rocks. Some of those Jews, who had their hands embued in Christ's blood, were saved by that blood: God loves to magnify his goodness, to display the trophies of free grace, and to set up his mercy above you, in spite of sin: therefore hope in God's mercy.

Branch 2. If God shew mercy to thousands, labour to know that this mercy is for you, *Pf. lix. 17. He is the God of my mercy.* A man that was ready to drown, saw a rainbow; saith he, what am I the better, tho' God will not drown the world, if I drown? so, what are we the better God is merciful, if we perish? let us labour to know God's special mercy is for us.

Qu. *How shall we know it belongs to us?*

Ans. 1. If we put an high value and estimate upon God's mercy: God will not throw away his mercy on them that slight it; we prize health, but we prize adopting mercy above it. This is the diamond in the ring, it outshines all other comforts.

2. If we are fearers of God, we have a reverend awe upon us; we tremble at sin, and flee from it, as *Moses* did from his rod turned into a serpent. *Luke i. 50. His mercy is on them that fear him.*

3. If we take sanctuary in God's mercy, we trust in it, *Pf. lii. 8.* As a man is saved by catching hold of a cable; God's mercy is a great cable let down from heaven to us: now taking fast hold of this cable by faith, we are saved, *Pf. lii. 8. I trust in the mercy of God for ever.* As a man trusteth his life and goods in a garrison, so we trust our souls in God's mercy.

Qu. *What shall we do to get a share in God's special mercy?*

Ans. 1. If we would have mercy, it must be through Christ; out of Christ no mercy is to be



be had. We read in the old law, *First*, None might come into the holy of holies, where the mercy-seat stood, but the high priest; signifying, we have nothing to do with mercy, but through Christ our high priest. *2/y*, The high priest might not come near the mercy-seat without blood, *Lev. xvi. 14.* to shew that we have no right to mercy; but through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood. *3/y*, The high priest might not, upon pain of death, come near the mercy-seat without incense, *Lev. xvi. 13.* No mercy from God without the incense of Christ's intercession: so that, if we would have mercy, we must get a part in Christ. Mercy swims to us through Christ's blood.

2. If we would have mercy, we must pray for it, *Pf. lxxxv. 7. Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. Pf. xxv. 16. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me.* Lord, put me not off with common mercy; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to pardon me; not only sparing mercy, but saving mercy. Lord, give me the cream of thy mercies; let me have mercy and loving-kindness, *Pf. ciii. 4. Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness, and tender mercy.* Be earnest suitors for mercy; let your wants quicken your importunity: then we pray most fervently, when we pray most feelingly.

EXOD. XX. 6. *Of them that love me, &c.*

1. **G**OD's mercy is for them that love him. Love is a grace that shines and sparkles in God's eye, as the precious stone did upon Aaron's breast-plate. Love is an holy expansion or enlargement of soul, whereby it is carried with delight after God as the chief good; so *Aquinas* defines love, *Complacentia amantis in amato*: love is a complacential delighting in God, as in our treasure: love is the soul of religion; 'tis a grace highly momentous. If we had knowledge as the angels, or faith of miracles, yet without love it would profit nothing, *1 Cor. xiii. 2. Love is the first and great commandment*, *Matth. xxii. 38.* It is so, because, if this be wanting, there can be no religion in the heart; there can be no faith, for faith works by love, *Gal. v. 6.* All is but pageantry, or a devout compliment.

2. Because love doth meliorate and sweeten all the duties of religion; it makes them savoury meat, else God cares not to taste of them.

3. It is the first and great commandment, in respect of the excellency of this grace. Love is the queen of the graces; it outshines all the other, as the sun the lesser planets. In some respect it is more excellent than faith; tho' in one sense faith be more excellent, *virtute unionis*, as it unites us to Christ; faith puts upon us the embroidered robe of Christ's righteousness, which is a brighter robe than any of the angels wear: yet in another sense love is more excellent, *respectu durationis*, in respect of the continuance of it; it is the most durable grace: faith and hope will shortly cease, but love will

remain. When all the other graces, like *Rachel*, shall die in travel, love shall revive. The other graces are in the nature of a lease, only for term of life; love is as a freehold, it continues for ever. Thus love carries away the garland from all the other graces, it is the most long-lived grace, it is a bud of eternity; this grace alone shall accompany us in heaven.

Qu. 1. *How must our love to God be qualified?*

Ans. 2. Love to God must be pure and genuine, he must be loved chiefly for himself; this the school-men call *amor amicitiae*. We must love God, not only for his benefits, but for those intrinsic excellencies wherewith he is crowned: we must love God not only for the good which flows from him, but the good which is in him. True love is not mercenary; a soul that is deeply in love with God, needs not to be hired with rewards; he cannot but love God for the beauty of his holiness: not but that it is lawful to look at God's benefits; *Moses* had an eye to the recompence of reward, *Heb. xi. 26.* but we must not love God only for his benefits, for then it is not love of God but self-love.

2. Love to God must be with all the heart, *Mark xii. 30. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* We must not love God a little, give him a drop or two of our love; but the main stream of our love must run after him; the mind must think of God, the will chuses him, the affections pant after him; the true mother would not have the child divided, nor God will not have the heart divided: we must

must love him with our whole heart. Tho' we may love the creature, yet it must be a subordinate love: love to God must be highest, as the oil swims above the water.

3. Love to God must be flaming; to love coldly, is all one as not to love. The spouse is said to be *amore percussa, sick of love*, Cant. ii.

5. The Seraphims are so called, from their burning: love turns saints into seraphims, it makes them burn in holy love to God; and many waters cannot quench this love.

Qu. 2. How may we know whether we love God?

Ans. 1. He that loves God, desires his sweet presence: lovers cannot be long asunder, they have their fainting-fits, they want a sight of the object of their love. A soul deeply in love with God, desires the enjoyment of him in his ordinances, in word, prayer, sacraments. *David* was ready to faint away and die, when he had not a sight of God, *Pf. lxxxiv.* 2. *My soul fainteth for God*: such as care not for ordinances, but say, when will the sabbath be over? plainly discover want of love to God.

2. He who loves God, doth not love sin, *Pf. xcvi.* 10. *Ye that love the Lord hate evil.* The love of God, and the love of sin, can no more mix together, than iron and clay: every sin loved, strikes at the being of God; but he who loves God, hath an antipathy against sin: he who would part between two lovers, is an hateful person: God, and the believing soul are two lovers; sin comes to part between them, therefore the soul is implacably set against sin. By this try your love to God: how could *Dalilah* say she loved *Samson*, when she entertained correspondence with the *Philistines* who were his mortal enemies? how can he say he loves God, who loves sin, which is God's enemy?

3. He who loves God, is not much in love with any thing else; his love is very cool to worldly things: his love to God moves as the sun in the firmament, swiftly; his love to the world moves as the sun on the dial, very slow. The love of the world eats out the heart of religion; it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world was a dead thing to *Paul*, *Gal. vi.* 14. *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.* In *Paul* we might see both the picture and pattern of a mortified man: he that loves God, useth the world, but chuseth God; the world is his pension, but God is his portion, *Pf. cxix.* 57. The world doth busy him, but God doth de-

light and satisfy him. He saith, as *David*, *Pf. xliii.* 4. *God my exceeding joy*, the gladness or cream of my joy.

4. He who loves God, cannot live without him. Things we love, we know not how to be without; a man can want music or flowers, but not food; a soul deeply in love with God looks upon himself as undone without him, *Pf. cxliii.* 7. *Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down unto the pit.* He saith, as *Job*, chap. xxx. 28. *I went mourning without the sun.* I have star-light, I want the sun of righteousness; I enjoy not the sweet presence of my God. Is God our chief good that we cannot live without? alas, how do they demonstrate they have no love to God, who can make a shift well enough to be without him? let them have but corn and oil, and you shall never hear them complain of the want of God.

5. He who loves God will be at any pains to get him. What pains doth the merchant take, what hazards doth he run, to have a rich return from the *Indies*? *Extremos currit mercator ad Indos.* *Jacob* loved *Rachel*, and he would endure the heat by day, and the frost by night, that he might enjoy her. A soul that loves God, will take any pains for the fruition of him, *Pf. lxiii.* 8. *My soul follows hard after God.* Love is *pondus animæ*, *Aug.* It is as the weight which sets the clock a-going. The soul is much in prayer, weeping, fasting; he strives as in agony, that he may obtain him whom his soul loves. *Plutarch* reports of the *Gauls*, an ancient people of *France*, after they had tasted the sweet wine of *Italy*, they never rested till they had arrived at that country. He who is in love with God, never rests till he hath gotten a part in him, *Cant. iii.* 2. *I sought him whom my soul loveth.* How can they say they love God, who are not industrious in the use of means to obtain him? *Prov. xix.* 24. *A slothful man hides his hand in his bosom.* These are not in agony, but lethargy: if Christ and salvation would drop as a ripe fig into his mouth, he could be content to have them; but he is loth to put himself to too much trouble. Doth he love his friend, that will not make a journey to him?

6. He that loves God, prefers him before estate and life. 1. Before estate, *Phil. iii.* 8. *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things.* Who that loves a rich jewel, would not part with a flower for it? *Galeanus* marquis of *Vico*,



parted with a fair estate to enjoy God in his pure ordinances : when a jesuit persuaded him to return to his popish religion in *Italy*, promising him an huge sum of money ; saith he, *Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's communion with Jesus Christ, and his holy Spirit.* 2. Before life, *Rev. xii. 11. They loved not their lives to the death.* Love to God carries the soul above the love of life, and the fear of death.

7. He who loves God, loves his favourites, viz. the saints, *1 John v. 1. Idem est motus animi in imaginem & rem.* To love a man for his grace, and the more we see of God in him, the more we love him, is the infallible sign of love to God. The wicked pretend to love God, but hate and persecute his image. Doth he love his prince who abuseth his statue, tears his picture ? Indeed they seem to shew great reverence to the saints departed ; they have a great reverence for *St. Paul*, and *St. Stephen*, and *St. Luke* : they canonize dead saints, but persecute living saints ; and do these love God ? can it be imagined he should love God, who hates his children because they are like him ? if Christ were alive again, he would not escape a second persecution.

8. If we love God, as we cannot but be fearful of dishonouring him (the more a child loves his father, the more he is afraid to displease him) so we weep and mourn when we have offended him. *Peter went out and wept bitterly*, *Matth. xxvi. 75.* When *Peter* thought how dearly Christ loved him, he took him up to the mount where he was transfigured ; Christ shewed him the glory of heaven in a vision : now, that he should deny Christ, after he had received such signal tokens of Christ's love, this broke his heart with grief, *He wept bitterly.* Are our eyes limbecked, dropping tears of grief for sin against God ? a blessed evidence of our love to God ; and such shall find mercy. *He shews mercy to thousands of them that love him.*

*Use.* Let us be lovers of God. We love our food, and shall not we love him that gives it ? All the joy we hope for in heaven, is in God ; and shall not he who shall be our joy, be our love ? It is a saying of *St. Austin*, *An non pœna satis magna est, non amare te ?* Is it not punishment enough, Lord, not to love thee ? And again, *Animam meam in odio haberem* : I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving of God.

*Qu. What are the incentives to provoke and inflame our love to God ?*

*Ans. 1.* God's benefits bestowed on us. A prince who bestows continual favours on a subject, if that subject hath any ingenuity, he cannot but love his prince. God is constantly heaping benefits upon us ; *He fills our hearts with food and gladness*, *Acts xiv. 17.* As the rock followed *Israel*, whithersoever they went, streams of water out of the rock followed them : so God's blessings follow us every day ; we swim in a sea of mercy. That heart is hard, that is not prevailed with by all God's blessings, to love him ; *magnes amoris amor.* Kindness works on a brute : the ox knows his owner.

2. Love to God would make duties of religion facile and pleasant. I confess, to him that hath no love to God, religion must needs be a burden : and I wonder not to hear him say, *What a weariness is it to serve the Lord ?* It is like rowing against the tide. But love oils the wheels, it makes duty a pleasure. Why are the angels so swift and winged in God's service, but because they love him ? *Jacob* thought seven years but little, for the love he did bear to *Rachel*. Love is never weary ; he who loves money, is not weary of telling it ; and he who loves God is not weary of serving him.

3. It is advantageous. There is nothing lost by our love to God, *1 Cor. ii. 9. Eye hath not seen, &c. the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Such glorious rewards are laid up for them that love God, *That* (as *St. Austin* saith) *they do not only transcend our reason, but faith itself is not able to comprehend them.* A crown is the highest ensign of worldly glory ; and God hath promised a *Crown of life to them that love him*, *James i. 12.* And it is a never-fading crown, *1 Pet. v. 4.*

4. By our loving God, we may know that he loves us, *1 John iv. 19. We love him, because he first loved us.* If the ice melts, it is because the sun hath shined upon it ; if the frozen heart melts in love, it is because the sun of righteousness hath shined upon it.

*Qu. What means may be used to excite our love to God ?*

*Ans. 1.* Labour to know God aright. The schoolmen say true, *Benum non amatur, quod non cognoscitur* : we cannot love that which we do not know. God is the most eligible good ; all the excellencies which ly scattered in the creature, are united in God : he is *Optimus maximus*. Wisdom, beauty, riches, love,

do all concentre in God. How fair was that tulip which had the colours of all tulips in it? all perfections and sweetnesses are eminently in God: Did we know God more, and by the eye of faith see his orient beauty, our hearts would be fired with love to him.

2. Make the scriptures familiar to you. St. *Austin* saith, before his conversion he took no pleasure in scripture, but after conversion it was his chiefest delight. The book of God discovers God to us, in his holiness, wisdom, veracity and truth: it represents God rich in mercy, incircled with promises. St. *Austin* calls the scripture a golden epistle, or love-letter sent from God to us: by reading this love-letter, we shall be the more enamoured with love to God; as by reading lascivious books, comedies, romances, lust is provoked.

3. Meditate much of God, and this will be means to love him, *Pf. xxxix. 3. While I was*

*musung, the fire burned.* Meditation is the bellows of the affections. Meditate on God's love in giving us Christ, *John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c.* That God should give Christ to us, and not to the angels that fell; that the sun of righteousness should shine in our horizon; that he is revealed to us, and not to others; what wonderful love is this! *Prov. vi. 28. Who can go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?* Who can meditate on God's love, who can tread on these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God? beg an heart to love God: the affection of love is natural, but not the grace of love, *Gal. v. 22.* The fire of love is kindled from heaven; beg that it may burn upon the altar of your heart. Sure this request is pleasing to God, and he will not deny such a prayer, *Lord, give me an heart to love thee.*

#### Exod. xx. 6. And keep my Commandments.

**L**OVE and obedience, like two sisters, must go hand in hand: indeed this is a good evidence of our loving God, *John xiv. 22. If ye love me, keep my commandments. Probatio dilectionis, est exhibitio operis.* The son that loves his father, will obey him. Obedience pleaseth God, *1 Sam. xv. 22. To obey is better than sacrifice.* In sacrifice, only a part of the fruit is offered; in obedience, fruit and tree, and all; a man offers up himself to God. *Keep my commandments.*] It is not said, God shews mercy to thousands that know his commandments, but that keep them. The knowing God's commandments, without keeping them, doth not entitle any to mercy. The commandment is not only a rule of knowledge, but duty. God gives us his commandments, not only as a landskip to look upon, but as his will and testament, which we are to perform. A good Christian is like the sun, which doth not only send forth light, but goes its circuit round the world; so he hath not only the light of knowledge, but goes his circuit too, and moves in the sphere of obedience.

Qu. In what manner must we keep God's commandments?

Ans. 1. Our keeping the commandments must be fiducial. Our obedience to God's commandments must *profluere a fide*, spring from faith; therefore it is called *the obedience of*

*faith*, *Rom. xvi. 21. Abel by faith offered up a better sacrifice than Cain*, *Heb. xi. 4.* Faith is a vital principle, without it all our services are *opera mortua*, dead works, *Heb. vi. 1.* Faith doth meliorate and sweeten our obedience, and makes it come off with a better relish. Qu. But why must faith be mixed with obedience to the commandment? Ans. Because faith eyes Christ in every duty, and so both the person and offering are accepted. The high priest under the law laid his hand upon the head of the beast slain, which did point to the Messiah, *Exod. xxix. 10.* So faith, in every duty, lays its hand upon the head of Christ. His blood doth expiate the guilt, and the sweet odours of his intercession perfume our works of obedience, *Eph. i. 6. He hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

2. Our keeping the commandments must be uniform. We must make conscience of one commandment as well as another, *Pf. cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.* Every commandment hath a *jus divinum*, the same stamp of divine authority upon it: and if I obey one precept because God commands, by the same reason I must obey all. Some obey the commands of the first table, but are careless in the duties of the second; and so, *e contra*. Physicians have a rule, when the body sweats in one



part, but is cold in another, it is a sign of a distemper: so, when men seem zealous in some duties of religion, but are cold and frozen in another, it is a sign of hypocrisy. We must have respect to all God's commandments.

Qu. *But who can keep all commandments?*

Ans. There is a fulfilling of God's commands, and a keeping of them: though we cannot fulfil all, yet we may be said to keep them in an evangelical sense. We may *facere*, though not *perficere*: we keep the commandments evangelically, 1. Where we make conscience of every command; though we come short in every duty, yet we dare not neglect any duty. 2. Our desire is to keep every commandment, *Pf. cxix. 5. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!* What we want in strength we make up in will. 3. We grieve that we can do no better: when we fail, we weep; we prefer bills of complaint against ourselves, and judge ourselves for our failings, *Rom. vii. 24. We do elicere conatum*, we endeavour to obey every commandment, *Phil. iii. 14. I press toward the mark.* We strive as in an agony, and, if it lay in our power, we would fully comport with every commandment. 5. When we fall short, and are unable to come up to the full latitude of the law, we look to Christ's blood to sprinkle our imperfect obedience, and with the grains of his merits cast into the scales to make it pass current: this is in an evangelical sense to keep all the commandments; and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

3. Our keeping God's commandments must be willing, *Isa. i. 19. If ye be willing and obedient.* God was for a free-will-offering, *Deut. xvi. 10. David will run the way of God's commandments, Pf. cxix. 32.* that is, freely and cheerfully. The lawyers have a canon, adverbs are better than adjectives: it is not the *bonum*, but the *bene*; not the doing *much*, but the doing *well*. A musician is not commended for playing long, but for playing well; it is obeying God willingly is accepted: *virtus nolentium nullum est*: the Lord hates that which is forced, it is rather a paying a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly; he brought his sacrifice, not his heart. To obey God's commandments unwillingly, is like the devils who came out of the men possessed, at Christ's command, but with reluctance, and against their will, *Mat. viii. 29. Obedientia præest, and a est non timore pænæ, sed amore Dei*; good duties must not be pressed nor beaten out of us, as

the waters came out of the rock, when *Moses* smote it with his rod; but must freely drop from us, as myrrhe from the tree, or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet-smelling favour unto God. That we may keep God's commandments willingly, let these things be well weighed;

1. Our willingness is more esteemed than our service; therefore *David* counsels *Solomon*, not only to serve God, but with a willing mind, *1 Chron. xxviii. 9.* The will makes sin to be worse, and makes duty to be better. To obey willingly, shews we do it with love; and this crowns all our services.

2. There is that in the law-giver, as may make us willing to obey the commandments, *viz. God's indulgence* to us.

(1.) God doth not require the *summum jus*, as absolutely necessary to salvation; he expects not perfect obedience, only requires sincerity. Do but act from a principle of love, and aim at honouring God in your obedience, and it is accepted.

(2.) In the times of the gospel a surety is admitted. The law would not favour us so far; but now God doth so indulge us, that what we cannot do of ourselves, we may do by proxy. *Jesus Christ is a surety of a better testament*, *Heb. vii. 22.* We fall short in every thing, but God looks upon us in our surety; and Christ having fulfilled all righteousness, it is as if we had fulfilled the law in our own persons.

(3.) God gives strength to do what he requires. The law called for obedience; but tho' it required brick, it gave no straw; but in the gospel, God with his commands gives power, *Ezek. xviii. 31. Make ye a new heart.* Alas! it is above our strength, we may as well make a new world, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will give you a new heart.* God commands us to cleanse ourselves, *Isa. i. 16. Wash ye, make you clean.* But who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? *Job xiv. 4.* Therefore the precept is turned into a promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. From all your filthiness will I cleanse you.* When the child cannot go, the nurse takes it by the hand, *Hos. xi. 3. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.*

3. There is that in God's commandments, which may make us willing; they are not burdensom.

1st. For a Christian (so far as he is regenerate)

rate) consents to God's commands, *Rom. vii. 16. I consent to the law that it is good.* What is done with consent, is no burden : if a virgin gives her consent the match goes on cheerfully ; if a subject consent to his prince's laws (as seeing the equity and rationality of them) then they are not irksome. A regenerate person in his judgment approves, and in his will consents to God's commandments, therefore they are not burdensom.

2dly. God's commandments are sweetned with joy and peace. *Cicero* questions whether that can properly be called a burden, which one carries with delight and pleasure ; *Utrum onus appellatur quod letitia fertur.* If a man carries a bag of money given him, it is heavy, but the delight takes off the burden. When God gives inward joy, that makes the commandments delightful, *Isa. lvi. 7. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.* Joy is like oil to the wheels, which makes a Christian run in the way of God's commandments, so that it is not burdensom.

3dly, God's commandments are advantageous. 1. The commandments are preventive of evil ; a curb-bit to check us from sin. What mischiefs would we not run into, if we had not afflictions to humble us, and the commandments to restrain us ? God's commandments are to keep us within bounds ; the yoke keeps the beast from straggling : we are to be thankful to God for precepts : had not he set his commandments as an hedge or bar in our way, we might have run to hell and never stopt.

2. There is nothing in the commandment, but what is for our good ; *Deut. x. 13. To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his Statutes, which I command thee for thy good.* 1. God commands us to read his word ; and what hurt is in this ? God bespangles the word with promises ; as if a father should bid his son read his last will and testament, wherein he makes over a fair estate to him. 2. God bids us pray : and he tells us, if we ask, *it shall be given, Mat. vii. 7.* Ask power against sin ; ask salvation, and it shall be given. If you had a friend should say, *Come when you will to me, I will supply you with money,* would you think it a trouble to visit that friend often ? 3. God commands us to fear him, *Lev. xxv. 43. But fear thy God.* And there is honey in the mouth of this command, *Luke i. 50. His mercy is upon them that fear him.* 4. God commands us to believe, and why so ? *Believe, and ye shall be saved, Acts xvi. 31.*

Salvation is the crown set upon the head of faith ; good reason then we obey God's commands willingly ; they are for our good, they are not so much our duty as our privilege.

3. God's commandments are ornamental ; *Omnia quae praestari jubet Deus, non onerant nos sed ornant.* *Salvian.* God's commandments do not burden us, but adorn us. It is an honour to be employed in a king's service ; and so to be employed in God's, by whom kings reign. To walk in God's commandments, proclaims us to be wise, *Deut. iv. 5, 6. Behold, I have taught you statutes : keep, therefore, and do them ; for this is your wisdom.* And to be wise is an honour : I may say of every commandment of God, as *Prov. iv. 9. It shall give to thy head an ornament of grace.*

4. The commandments of God are infinitely better than the commands of sin, these are intolerable. Let a man be under the command of any lust, how doth he tire himself ? What hazards doth he run to the endangering his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lust ? *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity.* And, are not God's commandments more equal, facile, pleasant, than the commands of sin ? *Chrysostom* saith true, *To act virtue is easier than to act vice.* Temperance is less troublesome than drunkenness ; meekness is less troublesome than passion and envy. There is more difficulty in the contrivement and pursuit of a wicked design, than in obeying the commandments of God. Hence a sinner is said to travail with iniquity, *Pf. vii. 14.* A woman, while she is in travail, is in pain ; to shew what pain and trouble a wicked man hath, in bringing forth sin. Many have gone with more pains to hell, than others have to heaven. This may make us obey the commandments willingly.

5. Willingness in obedience makes us resemble the angels. The Cherubims, types representing the angels, are described with wings displayed, to shew how ready the angels are to serve God. God no sooner speaks the word, but they are ambitious to obey : how are they ravished with joy, while they are praising God ! In heaven we shall be as the angels ; by our willingness to obey God's commandments, we shall be like them here. This is that we pray for, that *God's will* may be done by us on earth, as it is in heaven : is it not done willingly there ? We must keep God's commandments constantly, *Pf. cvi. 3. Blessed is he who doth righteousness*



at all times. Our obedience to the command must be as the fire of the altar, which never went out, *Lev. xiii. 6.* It must be as the motion of the pulse always beating. The wind blows off the fruit, our fruits of obedience must not be blown off by the wind of persecution, *John xv. 16. I have chosen you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*

*Use 1.* It reproves them who live in a wilful breach of God's commandments, in malice, uncleanness, intemperance; they walk antipodes to the commandment. To live in a wilful breach of the commandment, is,

1<sup>ly</sup>, Against reason. Are we able to stand it out against God? *1 Cor. x. 22. Do we provoke the Lord? are we stronger than he?* Can we measure arms with God? can impotency stand against omnipotency? A sinner, in acting sin, acts against reason.

2<sup>ly</sup>, It is against equity. We have our being from God; and, is it not equal we should obey him who gives us our being? we have all our subsistence from God; and is it not fitting, that as God gives us our allowance, we should give him our allegiance? If a general gives his soldier pay, he is to march at his command; so that to live in the breach of his commands, is against equity.

3<sup>ly</sup>, It is against nature. Every creature in its kind obeys God's laws: 1. Animate creatures obey him; God spake to the fish, and it set *Jonah* a-shore, *Jonah ii. 20.* 2. Inanimate creatures; the wind and the sea obey him, *Mark iv. 41.* The very stones, if God give them a commission, will cry out against the sins of men,

*Hab. ii. 11. The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it: none disobey God but man and the devil; and can we find none to join with else?*

4<sup>ly</sup>, It is against kindness. How many mercies have we to allure us to obey! Miracles of mercy; therefore the apostle joins these two together, disobedient and unthankful, *2 Tim. iii. 2.* and this dyes a sin of a crimson colour. And, as the sin is great, (for it is a contempt of God, a hanging out of the flag of defiance against God, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft) so the punishment will be proportionable; such cut themselves off from mercy. God's mercy is for them that keep his commandments, but no mercy to them that live in a wilful breach of them. All God's judgments set themselves in battle-array against the disobedient. (1.) Temporal judgments, *Lev. xxvi. 15, 16.* (2.) Eternal. *Christ comes in flames of fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not, 2 Thess. i. 8.* Such as break the golden chains of God's commands, God hath iron chains to hold them; chains of darkness, in which the devils are held, *Jude 6.* As long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with all the wilful breakers of his commandments.

*Qu. How shall we do to keep God's commandments?*

*Ans.* Beg the Spirit of God. We cannot do it in our own strength; *The Spirit must work in us both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 13.* When the loadstone draws, the iron moves; when God's Spirit draws, then we run in the way of God's commandments.

## OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

*Exod. xx. 7. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.*

**T**HIS commandment has two parts; *First*, A negative expressed, That we must not take God's name in vain, *viz.* Cast any reflection and dishonour on God's name. *Secondly*, An affirmative implied, That we should have a care to reverence and honour his name; but that I shall speak to more fully, when I come

to the first petition in the Lord's prayer, *Hallowed be thy name.* I shall now speak of the negative expressed in this commandment, or the prohibition, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* The tongue is an unruly member: all the parts and organs of the body are defiled with sin, as every branch

of wormwood is bitter; *But the tongue is full of deadly poison*, James iii. 8. There is no one member of the body doth more break forth into God's dishonour, than the tongue; therefore this commandment is a bridle for the tongue, it is to bind the tongue to its good behaviour; *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*: and this prohibition is backed with a strong reason, *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless*; that is, he will not hold him innocent. Men of place and eminency take it heinously to have their names abused, and will inflict heavy penalties on the offenders. *The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*; God looks upon him as a criminal person, and he will severely punish him. Well then, the thing to be insisted on, is, That great care must be had, that the holy and reverend name of God be not profaned by us, or taken in vain.

Qu. *How many ways may we be said to take God's name in vain?*

Ans. I. We take God's name in vain, when we speak slightly and irreverently of his name, *Deut. xxviii. 58. That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.* David speaks of God with reverence, *Pf. l. 1. The Lord, even the most mighty God.* *Pf. xxxviii. 18. That men may know, that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth.* And the disciples, speaking of Jesus, did hallow his name, *Luke xxiii. 19. Jesus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people.* When we mention the names of kings, we give them some title of honour, as *excellent majesty*; so should we speak of God with such sacred reverence, as is due to the infinite Majesty of heaven. When we speak slightly of God or his works, God interprets it to be a contempt, and it is a taking his name in vain.

II. When we profess God's name, but do not live answerably to it, it is a taking his name in vain, *Titus i. 16. In words they profess Christ, but in works they deny him.* When men's tongues and lives cross one another; when, under a mask of profession, men will lie and cozen, and be unclean, these make use of God's name to abuse him, they take his name in vain; *Simulata sanctitas duplex iniquitas.* *Rom. ii. 21. The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* When the heathen saw the Jews, who professed to be God's people, to be scandalous, this made them

speak evil of God, and hate the true religion for their sakes.

III. We take God's name in vain, when we use God's name in idle discourse. God is not to be spoken of, but with an holy awe upon our hearts: and to bring God's name in at every turn, when we never think of God, to say, *O God!* or, *O Christ!* or, *As God shall save my soul*: this is taking God's name in vain. And, how many are guilty in this kind! tho' they have God in their mouths, they have the devil in their hearts. 'Tis a wonder that fire doth not come out from the Lord and consume them, as it did *Nadab and Abihu*, *Lev. x. 2.*

IV. We take God's name in vain, when we worship him with our lips, but not our hearts, this is to abuse God. 'Tis the heart which God calls for, *Prov. xxiii. 26. My son, give me thy heart.* The heart is the chief thing in religion; it draws the will and affections after it, as the *Primum Mobile* the other orbs along with it. The heart is the incense that perfumes our holy things, it is the altar that sanctifies the offering. Now, when we seem to worship God, but withdraw our heart from him, we take his name in vain, *Isa. xxix. 13. This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips they do honour me, but they have removed their heart from me.*

1<sup>st</sup>, Hypocrites take God's name in vain, their religion is a lie; they seem to honour God, but they do not love him; their hearts go after their lusts, *Hos. iv. 8. They set their hearts on their iniquity.* Their eyes are lifted up to heaven, but their hearts are rooted in the earth, *Ezek. xxxiii. 31. These are devils in Samuel's mantle, they take God's name in vain.*

2<sup>ly</sup>, Superstitious persons take God's name in vain. They bring God a few ceremonies which he never appointed; they bow at Christ's name, and cringe to the altar, but hate and persecute God's image: these take his name in vain.

V. We take God's name in vain, when we pray to him, but do not believe in him. Faith is the great grace that honours God, *Rom. iv. 20. Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God*: but when we pray to God, but do not mix faith with our prayer, we take his name in vain. I may pray, (saith a Christian) but I shall be never the better; I question whether God doth hear, or whether he will grant. This is to dishonour God, and take his name in vain; this is to make God either an idol, that he hath



ears and hears not; or a liar, who promiseth mercy to the penitent, but will not make good his word, *John v. 10. He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.* When the apostle saith, *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* Rom. x. 14. the meaning is, How shall they call on God aright, and not believe in him? but how many do call on God who do not believe in him? they ask for pardon, but unbelief whispers, their sins are greater than can be forgiven. Thus to pray and not believe, is to take God's name in vain, and is an high dishonouring of God, as if he were not such a God as the word represents him, *Plen-teous in mercy to all that call upon him, Ps. lxxxvi. 7.*

VI. We take God's name in vain, when we in any kind profane and abuse his word. Now the word of God is profaned, *First*, In general, when profane men meddle with it. It is unseemly and unbecoming a wicked man to talk of sacred things, of God's providence, and the decrees of God, and heaven: it was very detestful to Christ, to hear the devil quote scripture, *It is written.* To hear a wicked man that wallows in sin, talk of God and religion, is offensive; it is the taking of God's name in vain. When the word of God is in a drunkard's mouth, it is like a pearl hung upon a swine. Under the law the lips of the leper were to be covered, *Lev. xiii. 45.* The lips of a profane, drunken minister ought to be covered; he is unfit to speak of God's word, and take his name in vain. But, *2ly*, more particularly, they profane God's word, and take his name in vain,

1. That speak scornfully of God's word, *2 Pet. iii. 4. Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* As if they had said, here is much ado the preachers make about the day of judgment, when all must be called to account for their works; but where is the appearing of that day? we see things keep their course, and continue as they were since the creation: thus they speak scornfully of scripture, and did take God's name in vain. If sentence be not speedily executed, men scorn and deride; but, *Prov. xix. 20. Judgments are prepared for scorers.*

2. That speak jestingly. Such are they who sport and play with scripture; 'tis playing with fire. Some cannot be merry, unless they make bold with God; they make the scripture an harp

to drive away the spirit of sadness. *Eusebius* relates of one who took a piece of scripture to jest with, God struck him with frenzy. To play with scripture, shews a very profane heart. Some will rather lose their souls, than lose their jests: these are guilty of taking God's name in vain. Tremble at it: such as mock at scripture, God will mock at their calamity, *Prov. i. 26.*

3. They abuse God's word, and take his name in vain, that bring scripture to countenance any sin. The word, which was written for the suppressing of sin, some bring it for the defending of sin. For instance, *First*, If we tell a covetous man of his sin, that covetousness is idolatry, he will bring scripture to maintain his sin: hath not God bid me live in a calling? *Six days shalt thou labour.* Hath not God said, that *he who provides not for his family is worse than an infidel?* Thus he goes to support his covetousness with scripture. *Ans.* It is true, God hath bid thee take pains in a calling, but not hurt thy neighbour; he hath bid thee provide for thy family, but not by oppression, *Lev. xxv. 14. Ye shall not oppress one another.* He hath bid thee look after a livelihood, but not with the neglect of thy soul: he hath bid thee lay up thy treasure in heaven, *Matth. vi. 20.* He hath commanded thee to lay out, as well as lay up; to sow seeds of charity on the backs and bellies of the poor, which perhaps thou neglectest; so that to bring scripture to uphold thee in thy sin, is an high profaning of scripture, and a taking of God's name in vain. *Second instance*, if we tell a man of his inordinate passions, That he may be drunk as well with rash anger, as wine; he will bring scripture to justify it: doth not the word say, *Be angry, and sin not,* Eph. iv. 26. 'Tis true, that anger is good, which is mixed with zeal; then anger is without sin, when it is against sin: but thou dost sin in thine anger; thou speakest unadvisedly with thy lips; thy tongue is set on fire of hell: and to bring scripture to defend thy sin, is to profane scripture, and to take God's name in vain.

4. They abuse the word, and take God's name in vain, who adulterate the word, and wrest it in a wrong sense. Such are heretics, who put their own gloss upon scripture, and make it speak that which the Holy Ghost never meant. For instance, *First*, When we expound these texts literally, which are meant figuratively. Thus the Pharisees were guilty, when

when God said in the law, *Thou shalt bind the commandments for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes*, Deut. vi. 8. The Pharisees took it in a literal sense; they got two scrolls of parchment, wherein they wrote the two tables, putting one on their left-arms, and binding the other to their eye-brows: thus they wrested the scripture, and took God's name in vain. That scripture was to be understood spiritually, and by a figure: God meant, by binding his laws upon their hands, that they should meditate on his law, and put it in practice: and so the papists expound that scripture, *This is my body*, literally, of the very body of Christ; then, when Christ gave the bread, he should have had two bodies, one in the bread, and the other out of the bread; whereas Christ meant it figuratively, it is a sign of my body. Thus they, by wresting the scriptures to a wrong sense, profane it, and take God's name in vain. 2ly, When we expound these scriptures figuratively and allegorically, which the Holy Ghost means literally. For example, Christ said to *Peter*, *Launch out into the deep, and make a draught*, Luke v. 4. This text is spoken in a plain, literal sense of launching out the ship; but the papists take it in a mystical and allegorical: this text proves, say they, that the pope, which is *Peter's* successor, shall launch forth, and catch the ecclesiastical and political power over the west parts of the world; this, say they, was meant when Christ bade *Peter* launch out into the deep: but I think the papists have launched out too far beyond the meaning of the text. When men strain their wits, to wrest the word to such a sense as pleaseth them; they do profane God's word, and highly take his name in vain.

VII. We take God's name in vain, when we swear by his name. Many seldom name God's name but in oaths; for this sin the land mourns, *Matth. v. 34. Swear not at all*, that is, rashly and sinfully, so as to take God's name in vain: not but that in some cases it is lawful to take an oath before a magistrate, *Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and swear by his name*. Heb. vi. 16. *An oath for confirmation is the end of all strife*: but when Christ saith, *swear not at all*; he forbids such a swearing as takes God's name in vain. There is a threefold swearing forbidden;

1. Vain-swearing; when men in their ordinary discourse, let fly oaths. Some will go to excuse their swearing. It is a coarse wool that

will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse.

*Excuse 1.* I swear little trifling oaths; as, *Faith, or, By the mass.* *Ans.* The devil hath two false glasses, which he sets before men's eyes: the one is a little glass, in which the sin appears so small, that it can hardly be seen; this glass the devil sets before men's eyes when they are going to commit sin: the other is a great multiplying glass, wherein sin appears so big, that it cannot be forgiven; the devil sets this before men's eyes when they have sinned. Thou that sayest, sin is small, when God shall open the eye of thy conscience, then thou wilt see it great, and be ready to despair. But to answer this plea, thou sayest, they are but small oaths; but Christ forbids vain oaths, *Swear not at all*: if God will reckon with us for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account-book?

*Excuse 2.* But I swear to the truth. See how this harlot-sin would paint itself with an excuse. *Ans.* 1. Tho' it be true, yet, if it be a rash oath, 'tis sinful. Besides, 2. He that swears commonly, it cannot be avoided but sometimes he must swear more than is true: as, where much water runs, some gravel or mud will pass along with the water; so, where there is much swearing, some lies will run along with the oaths.

*Excuse 3.* But I shall not be believed, unless I seal up my word with an oath. *Ans.* 1. A man that is honest will be believed without an oath; his bare word carries authority with it, and is as good as letters testimonial. 2. I answer, He who swears the more he swears, the less others will believe him: *Juris credit minus*: thou art a swearer. Another thinks an oath weighs very light with thee, thou carest not what thou swearest; and the more thou swearest, the less he believes thee. He will trust thy bond, but not thy oath.

*Excuse 4.* But it is a custom of swearing I have gotten, and I hope God will forgive me. *Ans.* Tho' among men custom carries it, and is pleadable in law; yet it is not so in the case of sin, custom here is no plea. Thou hast got an habit of swearing, and canst not leave it; is this an excuse? is a thing well done, because it is commonly done? this is so far from being an excuse, that it is an aggravation of sin. As if one that had been accused for killing a man, should plead with the judge to spare him, because it was his custom to murder; this is an



aggravation of the offence, so it is here : therefore all excuses for this sin of vain-swearing are taken away. Dare not to live in this sin, it is a taking of God's name in vain.

2. Vile swearing, horrid prodigious oaths not to be named. Swearers, like mad dogs, flee in the face of heaven; and when they are angered, spue out their blasphemous venom on God's sacred Majesty. Some in gaming, when things go cross, and the dice run against them, their tongues run as fast against God in oaths and curses: and tell them of their sin, go to bring home these asses from going astray, and it is but pouring oil on the flame, they will swear the more. *St. Austin* saith, *They do no less sin who blaspheme Christ now in heaven, than the Jews did, who crucified him on earth.* Swearers profane Christ's blood, and tear his name. An harlot told her husband, that of her three sons, there was but one of them his: the father dying, desired the executors to find out which was the true natural son, and all his estate he bequeathed to him. The father being dead; the executors set up his corps against a tree, and delivered to every one of these three sons a bow, and arrows, telling them, that he who could shoot nearest the father's heart should have all the estate. The two bastard-sons shot as near as they could to his heart, but the third did feel nature so work in him, that he refused to shoot at his father's heart: whereupon the executors judged him to be the true son, and gave all the estate to him. Such as are the true children of God fear to shoot at him; but such as are bastards, and not sons, care not tho' they shoot at him in heaven with their oaths and curses. And which makes swearing yet more heinous is, when men have resolved upon any wicked action, they bind themselves with an oath to do it; such were they, *Acts* xxiii. 12. who bound themselves with an oath and curse to kill *Paul*. To commit sin is bad enough; but to swear we will commit sin, is an high profaning God's name, and is as it were to call God to approve our sin.

3. *Forswearing*: this is an heaven-daring sin, *Lev. xix. 12. Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shall ye prophane my name.* Perjury is a calling God to witness to a lie. It is said of *Philip of Macedon*, he would swear and unswear, as might stand best with his interest. *Jer. iv. 2. Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.* In righteousness, therefore it must not be an unlaw-

ful oath. In judgment, therefore it must not be a rash oath. In truth, therefore it must not be a false oath. Among the *Scythians*, if a man did forswear himself, he was to have his head stricken off: because if perjury were allowed, there would be no living in a commonwealth; it would take away all faith and truth among men. The perjurer is in as bad a case as the witch; for, by a false oath, he binds his soul fast to the devil. In forswearing or taking a false oath in a court, there are many sins linked together; *plurima peccata in uno*: for, besides the taking God's name in vain, the perjurer is a thief; by his false oath he robs the innocent of his right: he is a perverter of justice; he doth not only sin himself, but occasions the jury to give a false verdict, and the judge to pass an unrighteous sentence: and sure God's judgments will find him out. When God's slying-roll or curse goes over the face of the earth, into whose house doth it enter? *Into the house of him that swears falsely: and it shall consume the timber and stones of his house, Zech. v. 4.* *Beza* relates of a perjurer, that he had no sooner taken a false oath, but he was immediately struck with an apoplexy, and never spake more, but died. O tremble at such horrid impiety!

VIII. We highly take God's name in vain, when we prefix God's name to any wicked action. I say, the mentioning of God in a wicked design, is taking his name in vain. *2 Sam. xv. 7. I pray (saith Absalom) let me pay my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.* This pretence of paying his vow made to God, was only to colour over his treason, *v. 10. When ye hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say, Absalom reigneth.* When any wicked action is baptized with the name of religion, this is taking God's name in vain. Herein the pope is guilty highly, when he sends out his bulls of excommunication or curses against the Christians; he begins with, *In nomine Domini, in the name of God.* What a provoking sin is this! It is to do the devil's work, and put God's name to it.

IX. We take God's name in vain, when we use our tongues any way to the dishonour of God's name; as when we use railing, or curse in our passions: especially when we wish a curse upon ourselves if a thing be not so, when we know it to be false. I have read of one who wished his body might rot, if that which he said, was not true; and soon after his body rotted,



rotted, and he became a loathsome spectacle.

X. We take God's name in vain, by rash and unlawful vows. There is a good vow when a man binds himself by a vow to do that which the word binds him to; as, if he be sick, he vows, if God restore him, he will live a more strict holy life, *Pf. lxxvi. 13. I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered when I was in trouble.* But *Voveri non debet quod Deo displicet*: Such a vow should not be made, as is displeasing to God; as to vow voluntary poverty, as your friars; or, to vow to live in nunneries. *Jephtha's* vow was rash and unlawful; he vowed to the Lord to sacrifice that to him which he met with next, and it was his daughter, *Judges xi. 31.* He did ill to make the vow, and worse to keep it; he became guilty of the breach of the third and sixth commandments.

XI. When we speak evil of God, now we take his name in vain, *Numb. xxii. 5. They spake against God.* Qu. *How do we speak against God?* Ans. When we murmur at his providences, as if he had dealt hardly with us. Murmuring is the accusing of God's justice, *Gen. xviii. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Murmuring springs from a bitter root, it comes from pride and discontent: it is a reproaching of God, and a high taking his name in vain. It is such a sin as God cannot bear, *Numb. xiv. 27. How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?*

XII. And lastly, We take God's name in vain, when we falsify our promise: to say, if God spare us life we will do this, and never intend it. Our promise should be sacred and inviolable; but, if we make no reckoning to make a promise, and mention God's name in it, yet never intend to keep it, it is a double sin; it is telling a lie, and taking God's name in vain. I should come now to the affirmative implied: but hereafter-----

*Use.* Take heed of taking God's name in vain any of these ways. Remember this commination and threatening in the text, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless.* Here is a *meiosis*; less is said, and more intended: *He will not hold him guiltless*; that is, he will be severely avenged on such an one. *The Lord will not hold him guiltless.* Here the Lord speaks after the manner of a judge, who holds the court of assize: the judge here, is God himself; the accusers, Satan, and a man's own conscience: the

matter of fact is, *Taking God's name in vain*; the malefactor accused is found guilty, and condemned; *The Lord will not hold him guiltless.* Methinks, these words, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless*, may set a lock upon our lips, and make us afraid of speaking any thing that may redound dishonour upon God, or may be a taking his name in vain: *The Lord will not hold him guiltless.* It may be men may hold such guiltless, when they curse, swear, speak irreverently of God: men may hold them guiltless, let them alone, not punish them. If one takes away another's good name, he shall be sure to be punished; but if he takes away God's good name, where is he that doth punish him? he that robs another's goods, shall be put to death; but he that robs God of his glory, by oaths and curses, he is spared; but God himself will take the matter into his own hand, and he will punish him who takes his name in vain.

1. Sometimes God punishes swearing and blasphemy in this life. 1st, Swearing, In the country of *Samuria* there arose a great tempest of thunder and lightning: a soldier burst forth into swearing; but the tempest tearing up a great tree by the roots, it fell upon him, and crushed him to pieces. The *German* history relates of a youth, who was given to swearing, and did use to invent new oaths; the Lord sent a canker into his mouth, which did eat out his tongue, whereupon he died. 2ly, Blasphemy. He who did blaspheme God, the Lord caused him to be stoned to death, *Lev. xxiv. 11. 23. The Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. And Moses spake to the people of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed, and stone him with stones.* *Olympias*, an *Arian* bishop, reproached and blasphemed the sacred Trinity; whereupon he was suddenly struck with three flashes of lightning, which burned him to death. *Felix*, an officer of *Julian*, seeing the holy vessels which were used in the sacrament, said, in scorn of Christ, *See what precious vessels the Son of Mary is served withal.* Soon after he was taken with a vomiting of blood out of his blasphemous mouth, whereof he died.

2. Or, if God should not execute judgment on the profaners of his name in this life, yet their doom is to come; God will not remit their guilt, but deliver them to Satan the gaoler, to torment them for ever. If God justify a



man, who shall condemn him? But, if God condemn him, who shall justify him? If God lay a man in prison, where shall he get bail or main-prize? God will take his full blow at

the sinner in hell, *Heb. x. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

## OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 8. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six Days shalt thou labour, and do all thy Work: But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, nor thy Maid-servant, nor thy Cattle, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates. For in Six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh Day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.*

**T**HIS commandment was engraven in stone by God's own finger, and it will be our comfort to have it engraven in our hearts.

The sabbath-day is set apart for God's solemn worship; it is God's inclosure, and it must not be alienated to common uses. The Lord hath set a preface before this commandment, he hath put a *memento* to it, *Remember to keep the sabbath-day holy.* This word *remember*, shews, that we are apt to forget sabbath-holiness; therefore we need a *memorandum* to put us in mind of sanctifying this day.

I shall explain the words.

1. Here is a solemn command, *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.*

2. Many cogent arguments to induce us to observe the command.

I. In the command, (1.) The matter of it, *viz.* The sanctifying of the sabbath, which sabbath-sanctification consists in two things,

1. In resting from our own works.

2. In a conscientious discharge of our religious duties.

(2.) The persons to whom the command of sanctifying the sabbath is given, *ast*, Either superiors; and they are, 1. More private, as parents and masters. Or, 2. More public, as Magistrates. Or, *2ly*, Inferiors. 1. Natives, as children and servants, *Thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant and thy maid-servant.* 2. Foreigners, *The stranger that is within thy gates.*

II. The cogent arguments to obey this command of keeping holy the sabbath, 1. From the rationality of it.---- *Six days shalt thou la-*

*bour and do all thy work:* as if God had said, I am not an hard master, I do not grudge thee time to look after thy calling, and to get an estate. I have given thee six days, six to do all thy work in, and have taken but one day for myself: I might have reserved six days for myself, and allowed thee but one; but I have given thee six days for the works of thy calling, and have taken but one day for my own service: therefore it is equal and rational, that thou shouldst set this day in a special manner apart for my worship.

2. The second argument for sanctifying the sabbath, is taken from the justice of it. *The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;* as if God had said, the sabbath-day is my due, I challenge a special right in it, and none hath any thing to do to lay claim to it. He who robs me of THIS DAY, and puts it to common uses, is a sacrilegious person, he steals from the crown of heaven, and I will in no wise hold him guiltless.

3. The third argument for sanctifying the sabbath, is taken from God's own pattern, *he rested the seventh day;* as if the Lord should say, Will you not follow my pattern? having finished all my works of creation, I rested the seventh day: so you having done all your *secular work* on the six days, you should now cease from the labour of your calling, and dedicate the seventh day to the Lord, as a day of holy rest.

4. The fourth argument for sabbath-sanctification, is taken *ab utili*, from the *benefit* which redounds from a religious observation of the sabbath; *The Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed*

*hallowed it* : it is not only a day of God's appointment, God did not only appoint the seventh day, but he *blest* the seventh day. The sabbath-day is not only a day of *honour* to God, but a day of *blesting* to us ; it is not only a day wherein we give God worship, but a day wherein he gives us grace ; on this day a blessing drops down from heaven. This is a great argument for the keeping the sabbath-day holy ; God is not benefited by it, we cannot add one cubit to his essential glory : but we ourselves are advantaged ; the sabbath-day, religiously observed, entails a blessing upon our souls, our estate, our posterity ; as the not keeping this day holy brings a curse, *Jer. xvii. 27.* God curseth a man's blessings, *Mal. ii. 2.* The bread which he eats is poisoned with a curse ; so the conscientious observation of the sabbath, brings all manner of blessings with it. These are the arguments to induce sabbath-sanctification. And so I have divided the commandment into its several parts, and explained the sense of it.

The thing I would have you observe is, That this commandment about keeping the sabbath, was not abrogated with the ceremonial law, but it is purely *moral*, and the observation of the sabbath is to be continued to the end of the world. Where can we show that God hath given us a discharge from keeping one day in seven ? So that I say, this fourth commandment is *moral*, and obligeth Christians to the perpetual commemoration and sanctification of the sabbath.

*Qu. Why God hath appointed a sabbath ?*

*Ans. 1.* In respect of *himself* : it is requisite that God should reserve one day in seven for his own immediate service, that hereby he might be acknowledged to be the great Plenipotentiary or sovereign Lord, who hath power over us both to command worship, and appoint the time when he will be worshipped.

2. In respect of *us* : the sabbath-day makes for our *interest*, it promotes *holiness* in us ; the business on the week-day makes us too forgetful of God and our souls ; the sabbath brings God into our remembrance. When the dust of the world falling hath clogged the wheels of our affections, that they would scarce move towards God, the sabbath comes, and oils the wheels of our affections, and now they move swiftly in religion : therefore God hath appointed a sabbath to ripen our holiness. On this day the thoughts contemplate heaven, the tongue speaks of God, and is as the *pen of a*

*ready writer* ; now the eyes drop tears, now the soul burns in love. When the heart was all the week frozen, now on the sabbath it is melted with the word. The sabbath is a friend to religion, it files off the rust of our graces ; it is a spiritual jubilee, wherein the soul is set to converse with its Maker.

I should, in the next place, shew you the *modus* or manner how we should keep the sabbath-day holy. But, before I come to that, I shall propound a great question, *viz.*

*Qu. How comes it to pass that we do not keep the seventh-day sabbath, as it was in the primitive institution, but have changed it to another day ?*

*Ans.* The old seventh-day sabbath (which was the *Jewish* sabbath) is abrogated, and in the room of it the first day of the week (which is the *Christian* sabbath) succeeds. The *moral*ity or *substance* of the fourth commandment doth not ly in keeping the *seventh* day *precisely*, but in keeping one day in seven, which God hath appointed.

*Qu. But how comes the first day in the week to be substituted in the room of the seventh day ?*

*Ans.* Not by ecclesiastic authority. The church (saith Mr. Perkins) hath no power to ordain a sabbath. But,

1. The change of the sabbath from the last day of the week to the first, was by Christ's own appointment. Christ is *Lord of the sabbath*, Mark ii. 28. And who shall appoint a day but he who is Lord of it ? He made this day, *Pf. cxviii. 24.* *This is the day which the Lord hath made.* Arnobius and the current of expositors understand it of our Christian sabbath, and it is called the *Lord's day*, Rev. i. 10. As it is called the *Lord's supper*, because of the Lord's instituting the bread and wine, and setting it apart from a common use to a more special and sacred use : so it is called the *Lord's day*, because of the Lord's instituting it, and setting it apart from common days, to his special worship and service. Christ arose on the first day of the week out of the grave, and appeared twice on this day to his disciples, *John xx. 19. 26.* which was to intimate to the disciples (say *Austin* and *Athanasius*) that he transferred the *Jewish* sabbath to the *Lord's day*.

2. The keeping of the first day (which is the *Lord's day*) was the practice of the apostles, *1 Cor. xvi. 2.* *Acts xx. 7.* *On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break*



*break bread*, Paul preached to them. Here was both preaching and breaking of bread on this day. *Austin*, and *Innocentius*, and *Isidore*, make the keeping of our gospel-sabbath to be an apostolical *function*, and affirm, that by virtue of the apostles practice, *this Lord's day* is to be sequestred and set apart for divine authority; for they were inspired by the Holy Ghost.

3. Besides, the primitive church had the Lord's day, which now we celebrate, in high estimation: it was a great badge of their religion, to observe this day. *Ignatius* the most ancient father, who lived in the time of St. *John* the apostle, hath these words, *Let every one that loveth Christ, keep holy the first day of the week, the Lord's day*. This day hath been observed by the church of Christ, above sixteen-hundred years, as learned *Bucer* notes. Thus you see how the seventh-day sabbath comes to be changed to the first-day sabbath.

Now there is a *grand reason* for changing of the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day, because this puts us in mind of the *Mystery of our redemption by Christ*. The reason why God did institute the old sabbath was, Because God would have it kept as a memorial of the creation: but the Lord hath now brought the first day of the week in the room of it, in memory of a more glorious work than *Creation*, and that is *Redemption*.

Great was the work of *creation*, but greater was the work of *redemption*. As it was said, *Hag. ii. 9. The glory of the second temple was greater than the glory of the first temple: so the glory of the redemption was greater than the glory of the creation*. Great wisdom was seen in the curious making us, but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out of nothing, but greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. It *cost more* to redeem us, than to create us. In the creation there was but *speaking a word*, *Pf. cxlviii. 5*. In the redeeming us, there was *shedding of blood*, *1 Pet. xviii. 19. The creation was the work of God's fingers*, *Pf. viii. 3. Redemption was the work of his arm*, *Luke i. 5*. In the creation, God gave us *ourselves*; in the redemption, he gave us *himself*: by creation, we have a life in *Adam*; by redemption, we have a life in *Christ*, *Col. iii. 3*. By creation, we had a right to an earthly paradise, by redemption, we have a title to an heavenly kingdom. So that well Christ might

change the seventh day of the week into the first, because this day puts us in mind of our redemption, which is a more glorious work than the creation.

*Use*. The use I shall make, is, that we should have this Christian sabbath we now celebrate, in high veneration. The Jews called the sabbath, *The desire of days*, and the *Queen of days*; it is a day of sweet rest. This day we must call a *Delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable*, *Isa. lviii. 13*. Metal that hath the king's stamp upon it is honourable, and of great value. God hath set his royal stamp upon the sabbath: it is the sabbath of the Lord, this makes it honourable. This day we should look upon as the best day in the week. What the *Phoenix* is among the birds, what the sun is among the planets, that the Lord's day is among other days. *This is the day which the Lord hath made*, *Pf. cxviii. 24*. God hath made all the days, but he hath blessed this. As *Jacob* got the blessing from his brother, so the sabbath got the blessing from all the other days in the week: the sabbath is a day in which we converse in a special manner with God. The Jews called the sabbath *A day of light*; on this day the sun of righteousness shines upon the soul. The sabbath is the market-day of the soul, the cream of time; this is the day of Christ's rising out of the grave, and the Holy Ghost's descending upon the earth: this day is perfumed with the sweet odour of prayer, which goes up to heaven as incense: this day the manna falls, that angel's food: this is the soul's festival-day, on this day all the graces act their part: the other days of the week are most employed about earth, this day about heaven: then you gather straw, now pearl. Now Christ takes the soul up into the mount, and gives it transfiguring sights of glory; now Christ leads his spouse into the wine-cellar, and displays the banner of his love; now he gives her his spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate, *Cant. ii. 3*. The Lord doth usually reveal himself more to the soul on this day. The apostle *John* was in the spirit on the Lord's day, *Rev. i. 10*. He was carried up in divine raptures towards heaven. This day a Christian is in the altitudes, he walks with God, and takes as it were a turn with him in heaven, *1 John i. 3*. On this day holy affections are quickened; the stock of grace is improved, corruptions are weakened: on this day Satan falls like lightning before the majesty of the word.

word. Christ wrought most of his miracles upon the sabbath; so he doth now; the dead soul is raised, the heart of stone is made flesh. How should this day be highly esteemed and had in reverence! This day is more precious than rubies; God hath anointed this day with the oil of gladness above its fellows. On the

sabbath we are doing angels work, our tongues are tuned to God's praises. This sabbath on earth, is a shadow and type of that glorious rest and eternal sabbath we hope for in heaven, when God shall be the temple, and the Lamb shall be the light of it, *Rev. xxi. 22, 23.*

**Exod. xx. 9, 10.** *Six Days shalt thou labour and do all thy Work: But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of Work, &c.*

**SIX** days shalt thou labour.----God would not have any live out of a calling: religion seals no warrant for idleness. 'Tis as well a duty to labour six days, as to keep holy rest on the seventh day; *Six days shalt thou labour. 2 Thess. iii. 11. We hear there are some among you, walking disorderly, working not at all. Now, them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.* A Christian must not only mind heaven, but his calling. While the pilot hath his eye to the star, he hath his hand to the stern. Without labour the pillars of a commonwealth will dissolve, and the earth will be like the sluggard's field, over-run with briars, *Prov. xxiv. 31. Adam in innocency, tho' he was the monarch of the world, yet God would not have him idle, but he must dress and till the ground, Gen. ii. 15. Piety doth not exclude industry. Six days shalt thou labour: Standing water putrifies. The inanimate creatures are in motion; the sun goes its circuit, the fountain runs, the fire sparkles: and animate creatures; Solomon sends us to the ant and pismire to learn labour, Prov. vi. 6. chap. xxx. 35. The bee is the emblem of industry; some of the bees trim the honey, others work the wax, others frame the comb, others ly centinel at the door of the hive to keep out the drone. And shall not man much more inure himself to labour? That law in paradise was never yet repealed, *In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat bread, Gen. iii. 19.* Such professors are to be disliked, who talk of living by faith, but live out of a calling: they are like the lilies which toil not, neither do they spin, *Matth. vi. 28.* 'Tis a speech of holy and learned Mr. Perkins, *Let a man be endowed with excellent gifts, and hear the word with reverence, and receive the sacrament; yet if he practise not the duties of his calling, all is but hypocrisy.* What is an idle person*

good for? what benefit is there of a ship that lies always on the shore? or of armour that hangs up and rusts? To live out of a calling, exposeth a person to temptation. *Melancthon* calls idleness the *Devil's bath*, because he bathes himself with delight in an idle soul. We do not use to sow seed in ground when it lies fallow; but Satan sows most of his seed of temptation in such persons as ly fallow, and are out of a calling. Idleness is the nurse of vice. *Seneca*, an old heathen, could say, *Nullus mihi per otium dies exit; No day passeth me without some labour.* An idle person stands for a cypher in the world, and God writes down no cyphers in the book of life. We read in scripture of eating the *Bread of idleness*, *Prov. xxxi. 27.* and drinking the *Wine of violence*, *Prov. iv. 17.* It is as well a sin to eat the bread of idleness, as to drink the wine of violence. An idle person can give no account of his time: time is a talent to trade with, both in our particular and general calling; the slothful person *hides his talent in the earth*, he doth no good, his time is not lived, but lost: an idle person lives unprofitably, he cumburs the ground; God calls the slothful servant *Wicked*, *Matth. xxv. 26. Thou wicked and slothful servant. Draco*, whose laws were written in blood, deprived them of their life, who would not work for their living. In *Hetruria*, they caused such persons to be banished. Idle persons live in the breach of this commandment, *Six days shalt thou labour*: let them take heed they be not banished heaven. A man may as well go to hell for not working in his calling, as for not believing. So I pass to the next,

*But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work.*

Having spoken already of the reasons of sanctifying the sabbath, I come now to that question;



Qv. In what manner we are to sanctify the sabbath?

Ans. 1. *Negatively.* We must do no work in it; that is expressed in the commandment, *In it thou shalt do no manner of work.* God hath inclosed this day for himself; therefore we are not to lay it common, by doing any civil work. As *Abraham*, when he went to sacrifice, left his servant and the ass at the bottom of the hill, *Gen. xxii. 5.* So, when we are to worship God this day, we must leave all worldly business behind, leave the ass at the bottom of the hill. And as *Joseph*, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the Egyptians, so, when we would converse with God this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments. The Lord's day is a day of holy rest, all secular work must be forborn and suspended; it is a profaning the day, *Neb. xiii. 15.* *In these days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, as also wine-grapes and figs, and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; and I testified against them. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, What evil thing is that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day?* It is a sacrilege to rob that time for civil work which God hath dedicated and set apart for his worship. He that converts any time of the sabbath for worldly business, is a worse thief than he who robs on the highway; for such a thief does but rob man, but this thief robs God, he robs him of his day. The Lord forbade manna to be gathered on the sabbath, *Exod. xvi.* One would think that might have been dispensed with, for manna was the *Staff of their life*; and the time when manna fell, was early, between five and six in the morning; so that they might have gathered it betimes, and all the rest of the sabbath they might have employed in God's worship; and besides, they needed not to have taken any great journey for manna, for it was but stepping out of their doors, and it fell about their tents: yet they might not gather manna on the sabbath: and, but for purposing to gather it, God was very angry, *Exod. xvi. 27, 28.* *There went out some of the people on the seventh day to gather, and they found none: and the Lord said, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?* Surely the anointing Christ when he was dead, was a commendable work: but *Mary Magdalene*, and *Mary the mother of*

*James*, tho' they had prepared sweet ointments to anoint the dead body of Christ, yet they came not to the sepulchre to embalm him, till the sabbath was past, *Luke xxiii. 57.* *They rested on the sabbath-day according to the commandment.* The hand cannot be busied on the Lord's day, but the heart will be defiled. The very heathens, by the light of nature, would not do any secular work, in that time which they had set apart for the worship of their false gods. *Clemens Alexandrinus* reports of one of the emperors of *Rome*, that on the day of set worship for his gods, he did forbear warlike affairs, and did spend that time in his devotion. To do servile work on the sabbath, shews an irreligious heart, and highly affronts God: to work servile work this day, is to follow the devil's plough; it is to debase the soul. God hath made this day on purpose to raise the heart up to heaven, to converse with God, to do angel's work; and to be employed in earthly work, is to degrade the soul of its honour. God will not have his day intrenched upon, or defiled in the least thing: the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath, God would have him stoned, *Numb. xv.* One would think it a small thing, to pick a few sticks to make a fire; but God would not have this day violated in the smallest matters. Nay, that work which had a reference to a religious use, might not be done on the sabbath, as the hewing of stones for the building of the sanctuary: *Bezaleel*, who was to cut the stones, and carve the timber out for the sanctuary, yet he must forbear it on the sabbath, *Exod. xxxi. 15.* A temple is the place of God's worship, but it were a sin to build a temple upon the Lord's day. This is keeping the sabbath-day holy negatively, in doing no servile work. Yet caution: not but that works of necessity and charity may be done on this day; God, in these cases, will have mercy and not sacrifice. (1.) 'Tis lawful to take the necessary recruits of nature: food is to the body, as oil to the lamp. (2.) 'Tis lawful to do works of mercy, as helping our neighbour when either life or estate are in danger. Herein the *Jews* were too nice and precise, they would not suffer works of charity to be done on the sabbath: if a man were sick, they thought on this day they might not use means for his recovery. Christ charged them with this, that they were angry that he had wrought a cure on the sabbath, *John vii. 23.* If an house were on fire,

the Jews thought they might not bring water to quench it; if a vessel did run, they thought that on this day they might not stop it. These were *righteous overmuch*: here was seeming zeal, but it wanted discretion to guide it. But unless in these two cases, of necessity, and charity, all secular work is to be suspended and laid aside on the Lord's day; *In it thou shalt do no manner of work.* Which justly doth arraign and condemn many among us, who do too much foul their fingers with work on this day; some dressing great feasts, others in opening their shop-doors, and selling meat on the sabbath, which I have seen. The mariner will not set to sea but on the sabbath, and so runs full-sail into the breach of this commandment. Others work on this day, tho' *privately*; they put up their shop-windows, but follow their trade within doors: but tho' they think to hide their sin under a canopy, God sees it, *Pf. cxxxix. 5. Whither shall I go from thy presence?* ver. 12. *The darkness hideth not from thee.* These persons do profane this day, and God will have an action of trespass against them.

2. *Positively.* We keep the sabbath-day holy, by *consecrating and dedicating* this day to the *service of the high God.* 'Tis good to rest on the sabbath-day from the works of our calling: but, if we rest from labour, and do no more, the ox and the ass keep the sabbath as well as we; for they rest from labour. We must dedicate the day to God; we must not only *keep* a sabbath, but *sanctify* a sabbath. This sabbath-sanctification consists in two things; I. The solemn preparation for it. II. The sacred observation of it. 1. *The solemn preparation for it.* If a prince were to come to your house, what preparation would you make for his entertainment? sweep the house, wash the floor, adorn the room with the richest tapestry and hangings, that there might be something suitable to the state and dignity of so great a person. On the blessed sabbath God intends to have sweet communion with you; he seems to say to you, as Christ to *Zaccheus*, *Luke xix. 5. Make haste, and come down, for this day I must dine with you.* Now, what preparation should you make for entertaining this king of glory! now this preparation for the sabbath is, *First*, When the evening of the saturday approacheth, sound a retreat; call your minds off from the world; and summon your thoughts together, to think of the great work

of the day approaching. *Secondly*, Purge out all unclean affections, which may indispose you for the work of the sabbath. Evening preparation will be like the tuning of the instrument, it will fit the heart the better for the duties of the sabbath ensuing.

2. *The sacred observation of it*; touching which, these things are to be practised.

(1.) Rejoyce at the approach of this day, as being a day wherein we have a prize for our soul, and enjoy much of God's presence, *John viii. 56. Abraham saw my day, and rejoyced.* So, when we see the light of a sabbath shine, we should rejoyce, *Isa. lviii. 13. Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight*: this is the queen of days, which God hath crowned with a blessing. As there was one day in the week on which God did rain manna twice as much as upon any other day; so God rains down the manna of heavenly blessings twice as much on the sabbath, as on any other. This is the day wherein Christ carries the soul into the house of wine, and displays the banners of love over it; now the dew of the spirit falls on the soul, whereby it is revived and comforted. How many may write the Lord's day, the day of their new birth! this day of rest is a pledge and earnest of that eternal rest in heaven; and shall not we rejoyce at the approach of it? that day on which the sun of righteousness shines, should be a day of gladness.

(2.) Get up betimes on the sabbath-morning. Christ rose early on this day, before the sun was up, *John xx. 1.* Did Christ rise early to save us, and shall not we rise early to worship and glorify him? *Pf. lxiii. 1. Early will I seek thee.* Can we be up betimes on other days? the husbandman is early at his plough, the traveller riseth early to go his journey, and shall not we, when we are on this day travelling to heaven? certainly, did we love God as we should, we would rise on this day betimes, that we may meet with him whom *our soul loveth*. Such as sit up late at work on the night before, will be so buried in sleep, that they will hardly be up betimes on a sabbath morning.

(3.) Having dressed our bodies, we must dress our souls for the hearing of the word. As the people of *Israel* were to wash themselves before the law was delivered to them, *Exod. xix. 10.* so we must wash and cleanse our souls; and that is, by *reading, meditation, and prayer.*

I. By reading the word. The word is a great means to sanctify the heart, and bring it into a



sabbath-frame, *John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, &c.* And read the word not carelessly, but with seriousness and affection; it is the oracle of heaven, the well of salvation, the book of life. *David*, for the preciousness of God's word, esteemed it above gold; and, for the sweetness, above honey, *Pf. xix. 10.* By reading the word aright, our hearts, when they are dull, are quickened; when they are hard, are mollified; when cold and frozen, are inflamed; and we can say as the disciples, *Did not our hearts burn within us?* Some step out of their bed to hearing. The reason why many get no more good on a sabbath by the word preached, is because they did not breakfast with God in the morning by reading of his word.

II. *Meditation.* Get upon the mount of meditation, and so converse with God. Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself, that, by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to divine affections.

Meditation is a work fit for the morning of a sabbath. Meditate on four things;

(1.) On the work of creation. That is expressed here in the commandments. *The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, &c.* The creation is a looking-glass, in which we see the wisdom and power of God gloriously represented. God produced this fair structure of the world, without any pre-existent matter, and with a word, *Pf. xxxiii. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.* The disciples wondered that Christ could, with a word, calm the sea, *Matth. viii. 26.* But it was far more, with a word, to make the sea. Let us on a sabbath meditate on the infiniteness of our Creator. Look up to the firmament, there we may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars: look into the sea, there we may see *God's wonders in the deep, Pf. cvii. 24.* Look into the earth, there we may behold the nature of minerals, the power of the load-stone, the virtue of herbs, the beauty of flowers. By meditating on the works of creation, so curiously embroidered, we come to admire God and praise him, *Pf. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.* By meditating on the works of creation, we come to confide in God. He who can create can provide; he that could make us when we were nothing, he can raise us when we are low. *Pf. cxxiv. 8. Our help stands in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.*

(2.) Meditate on God's holiness, *Pf. cxi. 9. Holy and reverend is his name. Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* God is essentially, originally and efficiently holy: all the holiness in men and angels is but a crystal stream that runs from this glorious ocean. God loves holiness, because it is his own image: a king cannot but love to see his own effigies stamped on coin: God counts holiness his glory, and the most sparkling jewel of his crown, *Exod. xv. 11. Glorious in holiness.* Here is a meditation fit for our first entrance into a sabbath, God's holiness: the contemplation of this would work in us such a frame of heart as is suitable to an holy God: it would make us then reverence his name, hallow his day: while we are musing of the holiness of God's nature, we begin to be transformed into his likeness.

(3.) Meditate on Christ's love in redeeming us, *Rev. i. 5. Redemption exceeds creation; the one is a monument of God's power, the other of his love. Here is fit work for a sabbath.* O the infinite stupendous love of Christ in raising poor lapsed creatures from a state of guilt and damnation! (1.) *That Christ who was God should die;* that this glorious sun of righteousness should be in an eclipse: we can never enough admire this love, no, not in heaven. (2.) *That Christ should die for sinners;* not sinful angels, but sinful mankind. That such clods of earth and sin should be made bright stars of glory: O the amazing love of Christ! This was *Illustre amoris Christi mnemosynum*, Brugenfis. (3.) *That Christ should not only die for sinners, but die as a sinner,* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He was made sin for us.* He who was among the glorious persons of the Trinity, *was numbred among transgressors*, Isa. liii. 12. Not that he had sin, but he was like a sinner, having our sins imputed to him. Sin did not live in him, but it was laid upon him. Here was an hyperbole of love, enough to strike us into astonishment. (4.) *That Christ should redeem us, when he could not look to gain any thing, or be at all advantaged by us.* Men will not lay out their money upon a purchase, unless it will turn to their profit: but what benefit could Christ expect in purchasing and redeeming us? we were in such a condition, that we could neither deserve nor recompense Christ's love. *First,* We could not deserve it; for we were in our blood, *Ezek. xvi. 6. We had no spiritual beauty to tempt Christ.* Nay, we were

were not only in our blood, but we were up in arms, Rom. v. 8. When we were enemies, Christ died for us: when he was shedding his blood, we were spitting our poison. Secondly, As we could not deserve, so neither could we recompense Christ's love: for, 1. After he had died for us, we could not so much as love him, till he made us love him. 2. We could give Christ nothing in lieu of his love, Rom. xi. 35. *Who hath first given to him?* We were fallen to poverty. If we have any beauty, it is from Christ, Ezek. xvi. 14. *Thou wert comely through my comeliness which I put upon thee.* If we bring forth any good fruit, it is not of our own growth, it comes from Christ the true vine, Hos. xiv. 8. *From me is thy fruit found.* So that it was nothing but pure love, for Christ to lay out his blood to redeem such as he could not expect to be really bettered by. (5.) *That Christ should die so willingly,* John x. 17. *I lay down my life.* The Jews could not have taken it away, if he had not laid it down: he could have called to his Father for a legion of angels to be his life-guard; but what needed that, when his Godhead could have defended him from all assaults? but he laid down his life: the Jews did not so much thirst for Christ's death, as he thirsted for our redemption, Luke xii. 50. *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished?* Christ called his sufferings a baptism: he was to be baptized and sprinkled with his own blood; and Christ thought the time long before he suffered; *How am I straitned till it be accomplished.* Therefore to show Christ's willingness to die, his sufferings are called an offering, Heb. x. 10. *By the offering of the body of Jesus:* his death was a free-will-offering. (6.) *That Christ should not grudge nor think much of all his sufferings;* his being scourged and crucified (we grudge him a light service) but that he should be well contented with what he hath done; and, if it were to do again, he would do it. Isa. liii. 11. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.* As the mother, though she hath hard labour; yet when she sees a child brought forth, she doth not repent of her pangs, but is well contented: so Christ, though he had hard travail upon the cross, which put him into an agony, yet he doth not think much; he is not troubled, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees the man-child of redemption brought forth into the world. *He shall see of*

*the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,* (7.) *That Christ should make redemption effectual to some, and not to others;* here is the quintessence of love. Though there is a sufficiency in Christ's merit to save all, yet only some partake of its saving virtue; all do not believe. John vi. 64. *There are some of you that believe not.* Christ doth not pray for all, John xvii. 9. Some refuse Christ, Ps. cxviii. 22. *This is the stone which the builders refused.* Others deride him, Luke xvi. 14. Others throw off his yoke, Luke xix. 14. *We will not have this man to reign over us.* So that all have not the benefit of salvation by him. Herein appears the distinguishing love of Christ, that the virtue of his death should reach some, and not others. 1 Cor. i. 26. *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.* That Christ should pass by many of birth and parts, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon thee; that he should sprinkle his blood upon thee; *The depth of the love of Christ.* (8.) *That Christ should love us with such an entire transcendent love.* The apostle calls it a *Love which passeth knowledge,* Eph. iii. 19. That he should love us more than the angels: he loves them as his friends, believers as his spouse. He loves them with such a kind of love as God the Father bears to him, John xv. 9. *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.* O what an hyperbole of love doth Christ shew in redeeming us! (9.) *That Christ's love in our redemption should be everlasting,* John xiii. 1. *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.* As Christ's love is matchless, so endless: the flower of Christ's love is sweet; and that which makes it sweeter, it never dies. Christ's love is eternized, Jer. xxxi. 3. He will never divorce his elect spouse. The failings of his people cannot quite take off his love: they may eclipse his love, not wholly remove it; their failings may make Christ angry with them, but not hate them. Every failing doth not break the marriage-knot. Christ's love is not like the saint's love; sometimes they have strong affections towards Christ, at other times the fit is off, and they can find little or no love stirring in them: but it is not so with Christ's love to the saints, it is a love of eternity. When the sun-shine of Christ's electing love is once risen upon the soul, it never sets finally. Death may take away our life from us, but not Christ's love. Behold here a rare subject in a Sabbath



morning to meditate upon ! The meditations of Christ's wonderful love in redeeming us, would work in us a sabbath-frame of heart.

*First*, It would melt us into tears for our spiritual unkindnesses : that we should sin against so sweet a Saviour ; that we should be no more affected with his love, but requite evil for good : like the *Athenians*, who, notwithstanding all the good service *Aristides* had done them, banished him out of their city : that we should grieve Christ with our pride, rash anger, our unfruitfulness, animosities, strange factions. Have we none to abuse but our friend ? Have we nothing to kick against but the bowels of our Saviour ? Did not Christ suffer enough upon the cross, but must we needs make him suffer more ? Do we give him more *gall and vinegar to drink* ? O if any thing can dissolve the heart in sorrow, and broach the eyes with tears, it is disingenuity and unkindness offered to Christ. When *Peter* thought of Christ's love to him, how he had made him an apostle, and revealed his bosom-secrets to him, and taken him to the mount of transfiguration, and that he should deny Christ, it broke his heart with sorrow ; *he went out, and wept bitterly*, Mat. xxvi. 75. What a blessed thing is it to have the eyes dropping tears on a sabbath ! and nothing would sooner fetch tears, than to meditate on Christ's love to us, and our unkind requitals.

*Secondly*, The meditating on a Lord's Day morning of Christ's love, would kindle love in our hearts to Christ. How can we look on Christ's bleeding and dying for us, and our hearts not be warmed with love to him ? Love is the *soul* of religion, the purest affection ; it is not rivers of oil, but sparks of love that Christ values. And sure, as *David* said, *While I was burning the fire burned*, Psalm xxxix. 3. So *while* we are musing of Christ's love in redeeming us, the fire of our love would burn towards Christ ; and then is a Christian in a blessed sabbath-frame, when he is like a *Seraphim* burning in love to Christ.

(4.) On a sabbath-morning meditate on the glory of heaven. Heaven is the extract and quintessence of happiness. It is called a *kingdom*. Mat. xxv. 34. A kingdom for its riches and magnificence : it is set out by *precious stones, gates of pearl*, Rev. xxi. There is all that is truly glorious ; transparent light, perfect love, unstained honour, unmixed joy ; and that which crowns the joy of the celestial paradise, is eternity. Suppose earthly kingdoms were more

glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of *Sapphire*, yet they are corruptible : but the kingdom of heaven is eternal ; those rivers of pleasure *run for evermore*, Psalm xvi. 11. And that wherein the essence of glory consists, and makes heaven to be heaven, is the immediate sight and fruition of the blessed God, Psalm xvii. 15. *When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness*. O think of this *Jerusalem* above ! this is proper for a sabbath.

1. The meditation of heaven would raise our hearts above the world. O how would these things disappear and shrink into nothing, if our minds were mounted above the visible orbs, and we had a prospect of glory !

2. How would the meditation of heaven make us heavenly in our sabbath-exercise ! it would quicken affection, it would add wings to devotion, it would make us to be *in the spirit on the Lord's day*, Rev. i. 10. How vigorously doth he serve God, who hath a *crown of glory* always in his eye !

III. We dress our *souls* on a sabbath-morning, by prayer. Mat. vi. 6. *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet*, &c. Prayer sanctifies a sabbath.

(1.) The things we should pray for in the morning of the *Sabbath*.

Beg a blessing upon the word which is to be preached : that it may be a favour of life to us ; that by it our minds may be more illuminated, our corruptions more weakened, our stock of grace more increased : pray that God's special presence may be with us, that our hearts may burn within us while God speaks : pray that we may receive the word into meek humble hearts, James i. 22. That we may submit to it, and bring forth the fruits of it. Nor should we only pray for our selves, but for others.

*First*, For him who dispenseth the word ; that his tongue *may be touched with a coal from God's altar* ; that God would warm his heart, who is to help to warm others. Your prayers may be a means to quicken the minister. Some complain, they find not that benefit by the word preached : perhaps they did not pray for their minister as they should. Prayer is like the whetting and sharpening of an instrument, which makes it cut the better.

*Secondly*, Pray with and for your family : yea, pray for all the congregations that meet this day in the fear of the Lord ; that the dew of the spirit may fall with the manna of the word ; that some souls may be converted, and others strengthened,

strengthened; and that gospel ordinances may be continued, and have no restraint put upon them. These are the things we should pray for. The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless it be shaken with the hand of prayer.

(2.) The manner of our prayer. It is not enough to say a prayer, to pray in a dull cold manner, which teacheth God to deny; but we must pray with Reverence, Humility, Hope in God's mercy, Fervency, *Luke xxii. 44.* Christ prayed more earnestly. And that we may pray with more fervency, we must pray with a sense of our wants. He who is pinched with want, will be earnest in craving an alms. He prays most fervently, who prays most feelingly. This is to sanctify the morning of a *sabbath*, and it is a good preparatory for the word preached. When the ground is broken up by the plough, now it is fit to receive the seed; when the heart hath been broken by prayer, now it is fit to receive the seed of the word preached. Thus you see how to dress your souls on a *Sabbath-morning*. There are other duties remaining. *Exod. xx. 10.*

IV. Having thus dressed your souls in a morning, for the further sanctification of the sabbath, address your selves to the hearing of the word preached.

(1.) And when you are set down in your seat,

1. Lift up your eyes to heaven for a blessing upon the word to be dispensed, for, you must know the word preached doth not work as *physic*, by its own inherent virtue, but by a virtue from heaven, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost; therefore put up a short ejaculatory prayer for a blessing upon the word, that it may be made effectual to you.

(2.) The word being begun to be preached, set your selves in a right manner;

1. With reverence and holy attention, *Acts xvi. 14.* A certain woman named Lydia, attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. *Constantine* the emperor was noted for his reverend attention to the word, *Luke xix. 48.* Christ taught daily in the temple: and all the people were attentive to hear him. In the Greek, they hung upon his lip. Could we tell men of a rich purchase, they would diligently attend: and shall they not much more, when the gospel of grace is preaching to them? Now, that we may sanctify and hallow the sabbath by *attentive hearing*, take heed of two things, in hearing; viz. I. *Distraction*; II. *Drowsiness*.

I. *Distraction.* 1 Cor. vii. 35. *That ye may*

attend upon the Lord without distraction. It is said of St. Bernard, that when he came to the church-door, he would say, *stay here all my earthly thoughts*. So should we say to ourselves, when we are at the door of God's house, stay here all my *worldly cares*, and *wandering cogitations*; I am now going to *hearken* what the Lord will say to me. Distraction hinders devotion. Distraction in hearing is, when the mind is tossed with vain thoughts, and diverted from the business in hand. It is hard to make the quick-silver heart fix. St. Hierom complained of himself; *Sometimes* (saith he) *when I am about God's service, per porticus diambulo, I am walking in the galleries, and sometimes casting up accounts*. So, oft in hearing of the word, the thoughts dance up and down; and, when our eye is upon the minister, our mind is upon other things. Distracted hearing is far from sanctifying the sabbath. It must needs be very *hainous* to give way to vain thoughts at this time; because, when we are hearing the word, we are now in God's *special presence*. To do any treasonable action in the king's presence, is high impudence, *Jer. xxiii. 11.* *Yea, in my house have I found their wickedness*. So may the Lord say in my house, while they are hearing of my word, I have found wickedness; they have wanton eyes, and their soul is set on vanity. This enhanceth and aggravates the sin.

Qu. *Whence do these roving distracted thoughts in hearing come?*

Ans. 1. Partly from Satan. The devil is no *recusant*, he will be sure to be present in our *assemblies*: if he cannot hinder us from hearing, he will hinder us in hearing. *Job i. 6.* *When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them*. The devil sets vain objects before the fancy, to cause a diversion. Satan's great design is to render the word we hear fruitless: as when one is writing, another jogs him that he cannot write even; so, when we are hearing, the devil will be jogg-ing us with a temptation, that we should not attend to the word preached, *Zech. iii. 1.* *He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right-hand to resist him*.

These wandering thoughts in hearing come partly from ourselves. We must not lay all the blame upon Satan.

(1.) They come from the eye. A wandering eye causeth wandering thoughts. A thief may be let into the house at a window; so vain thoughts



thoughts are let in at the eye. So that, as we are bid to *keep our feet* when we enter into the house of God, *Ecc. v. 1.* so we had need make a *covenant with our eyes*, when we are in the house of God, *Job. xxxi. 1.* that we be not distracted by beholding other objects.

2. Wandering thoughts in hearing rise out of the heart. These sparks come out of our own furnace. Vain thoughts are the mud which the heart (as a troubled sea) casts up. *Mark vii. 21.* For, from within, *out of the heart* of men, proceed evil thoughts. It is the foulness of the stomach sends up fumes into the head; and the corruption of the heart sends up evil thoughts into the mind.

3. Distracted thoughts in hearing proceed from an evil custom. We inure ourselves to vain thoughts at other times, therefore we cannot forbear them on a sabbath. *Custom is a second nature.* *Jer. xlii. 23.* Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil? He that is used to bad company, knows not how to leave it; such as have vain thoughts keeping them company all the week, they know not how to get rid of them on the sabbath. Let me show you how evil these vain distracting thoughts in hearing are.

*First,* To have the heart distracted in hearing, is a disrespect to God's omniscience. God is an *all-seeing spirit*; and thoughts speak louder in his ears, than words do in ours, *Amos iv. 13.* He declareth unto man what is his thought. Therefore, to make no conscience of wandering thoughts in hearing, is the affronting of God's omniscience, as if he knew not our heart, or did not hear the language of our thoughts.

*Secondly,* To give way to wandering thoughts in hearing is hypocrisy. We pretend to hear what God saith, and our mind is quite upon another thing. We present God with our bodies, but do not give him our hearts. *Hos. vi. 11.* This hypocrisy God complains of, *Isa. xxix. 13.* This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me. This is to prevaricate and deal falsely with God.

*Thirdly,* Vain thoughts in hearing discover much want of love to God. Did we love God, we should listen to his words as oracles, and bind them upon the table of our heart, *Prov. iii. 3.* When a friend whom we love speaks to us, and gives us advice, we mind it with seriousness, and suck in every word. The giving our

thoughts leave to ramble in holy duties, shows the defect of our love to God.

*Fourthly,* Vain impertinent thoughts in hearing defile an ordinance: they are as *dead flies* in the box of ointment. When a string of the lute is out of tune, it spoils the music; distraction of thoughts puts our mind out of tune, and makes our services seem harsh and unpleasant. Wandering thoughts *poison* a duty, and turn it into sin, *Pf. cix. 7.* Let his prayer become sin. What can be worse, than to have a man's praying and hearing of the word become sin? Were it not sad, when the meat we eat should increase bad humours? So when the hearing of the word, which is the food of the soul should be turned into sin.

*Fifthly,* Vain thoughts in hearing, anger God. If the king were speaking to one of his subjects, and he should not give heed to what the king saith, but be thinking on another business, or playing with a feather; would not this provoke the king? So, when we are in God's presence, and God is speaking to us in his word, and we minding not much what he saith, but our hearts go after covetousness, *Ezek. xxxiii. 31.* Will not this anger God, to be thus slished? God hath pronounced a curse upon such, *Mal. i. 14.* Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing. To have strong lively affections to the world, here is a male in the flock; but to hear the word with distraction, to give God duties fly-blown with vain thoughts, this is to offer to the Lord a corrupt thing; this brings a curse, *cursed be the deceiver.*

*Sixthly,* Vain thoughts in hearing (when allowed and not resisted) make way for hardening the heart. A stone in the heart, is worse than in the kidneys. Distracted thoughts in hearing do not better the heart but harden it. Vain thoughts take away the holy awe of God which should be upon the heart; they make conscience less tender, and hinder the efficacy the word should have upon the heart.

*Seventhly,* Vain distracting thoughts rob us of the comfort of an ordinance. A gracious soul oft meets with God in the sanctuary, and can say, as *Cant. iii. 4.* I found him whom my soul loveth. He is like *Jonathan*, who having tasted the honey on the rod, his eyes were enlightened. But vain thoughts hinder the comfort of an ordinance, as a black cloud hides the warm, comfortable beams of the sun from us. Will God speak peace to us, when our thoughts are wandering

wandering to the ends of the earth? *Prov. xvii.* 24. If ever you would hear the word with attention, do as *Abraham*, he drove away the fowls from the sacrifice, *Gen. xv.* 11. so when we find these excursions, and sinful wandrings in hearing, labour to drive away the fowls; get rid of these vain thoughts; they are vagrants, and we must not give them entertainment.

Qu. *But how shall we get help against these vagabond thoughts?*

Ans. (1.) Pray and watch against them. (2.) Let the sense of God's omniscient eye overawe our hearts. The servant will not sport in his master's presence. (3.) Labour for an holy frame of heart. Were the heart more spiritual, the mind would be less feathery. (4.) Bring more love to the word. That which we love, we fix our minds upon; he that loves his pleasures and recreations, his mind is fixed upon them, and he can follow them without distraction. Were our love more set upon the word preached, our minds would be more fixed upon it: and surely there is enough to make us love the word preached; for it is the word of life, the inlet to knowledge, the antidote against sin, the quickner of holy affections: it is the true manna, which hath all sorts of sweet tastes in it: it is the pool of *Bethesda*, in which the rivers of life spring forth to heal the broken in heart: it is a sovereign elixir or cordial to revive the sorrowful spirit. Get love to the word preached, and you will not be so distracted in hearing. What the heart delights in, the thoughts dwell upon.

II. If you would sanctify the sabbath by diligent, attentive hearing, take heed of drowsiness in hearing; drowsiness shews much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God how drowsie, as if the devil had given them some opium to make them sleep? A drowsie temper is (now) very absurd and sinful. Are not you in prayer asking pardon of sin? Will the prisoner fall asleep when he is begging his pardon? In the preaching of the word, is not the bread of life breaking to you; and will a man fall asleep at his food? which is worse, to stay from a sermon, or sleep at a sermon? While you sleep, perhaps the truth was delivered, which might have converted your souls. Besides, sleeping is very offensive in these holy assemblies; it is not only a grieving the spirit of God, but a making the hearts of the righteous sad, *Ezek. xiii.* 27. It troubles them to see any show such a contempt

of God and his worship; to see men busie in the shop, but drowsie in the temple. Therefore, as Christ said, *Mat. xxvi.* 40. *Could ye not watch one hour?* so, can ye not wake one hour? I deny not but a child of God may sometimes through weakness and indisposition of body drop asleep at a sermon, but it is not voluntary or ordinary. The sun may be in an eclipse, but not often: if sleeping be customary and allowed, it is a very bad sign and a profaning of the ordinance. A good remedy against drowsiness is to use a spare diet upon this day. Such as indulge their appetite too much on a sabbath, are fitter to sleep on a couch, than pray in the temple. Now, that you may throw off distracting thoughts and drowsiness on the Lord's day, and may hear the word with reverend attention, consider,

1. It is God that speaks to us in his word; therefore the preaching of the word is called the *breath of his lips*, *Isa. xi.* 4. And Christ is said *now to speak to us from heaven*, *Heb. xii.* 25. as a king speaks in his ambassador. Ministers are but as the pipes and organs, it is the spirit of the living God breathes in them. When we come to the word, we should think thus with ourselves, God speaks in this preacher. The *Thessalonians* heard the word *Paul* preached, as if God himself had spoken unto them, *1 Thess. ii.* 13. *When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God.* When *Samuel* knew it was the Lord that spake to him, he lent his ear, *1 Sam. iii.* 10. If we do not regard God when he speaks to us, he will not regard us when we pray to him.

2. Consider, how serious and weighty the matters deliver'd to us are. As *Moses* said, *Deut. xxx.* 19. *I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I have set before you life and death.* Can men be regardless of the word, or drowsie when the weighty matters of eternity are set before them? We preach of Faith, and Holiness of Life, and the Day of Judgment, and the eternal Recompences: here is life and death set before you; and doth not all this call for serious attention? If a letter were read to one of special business, wherein his life and estate were concerned, would not he be very serious in listning to that letter? In the preaching of the word, your salvation is concerned; and, if ever you would attend, it should be now, *Deut. xxxii.* 47. *It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.*

3. To give way to *vain thoughts*, and *drowsiness*



*liness in hearing* doth much gratify Satan. He knows, that not to mind a duty, is all one, as not to do a duty : in religion, *What the heart doth not do, is not done.* Therefore Christ saith of some, *Hearing, they hear not*, Matth. xiii. 13. How could that be ? because, though the word founded in their ear, yet they minded not what was said to them, their thoughts were upon other things ; therefore it was all one as if they did not hear : *Hearing, they hear not* : and doth not this please Satan, to see men come to the word, and as good stay away ? they are haunted with vain thoughts, they are taken off the duty while they are in it ; their body is in the assembly, their heart in their shop : *Hearing, they hear not.*

4. It may be the last sabbath that ever we shall keep ; we may go from the place of hearing to the place of judging : and shall not we give reverend attention to the word ? did we think thus when we come into God's house, Perhaps this will be the last time that ever God will counsel us about our souls ; before another sermon, death's alarum will sound in our ears :

with what attention and devotion should we come hither, and our affections would be all on fire in our hearing ?

5. You must give an account for every sermon you hear, *Luke xvi. 2. Redde rationem ; Give an account of thy stewardship.* So will God say, Give an account of thy hearing : hast thou been affected with the word ? hast thou profited by it ? and how can we give an account, if we have been distracted in hearing, and have not taken notice what hath been said to us ? The Judge, to whom we must give an account, is God. Were one to give an account to man, he might falsify his accounts ; but we must give an account to God. *Nec donis corrumpitur, nec blanditiis fallitur*, Bern. He is so just a God, that he cannot be bribed, and so wise, that he cannot be deceived. Therefore, being to give an account to such an impartial Judge, how should we observe every word preached, remembering the account ? Let all this make us shake off distraction and drowsiness in hearing, and have our ears chained to the word.

EXOD. xx. 8. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, &c.*

II. **I**F you would hear the word aright, lay aside those things which may render the word preached ineffectual ; As,

1. *Curiosity.* Some come to the word preached, not so much to get grace, as to enrich themselves with notion : *Itching ears*, 2 Tim. iv. 3. *Austin* confesseth, That before his conversion, he went to hear St. *Ambrose*, rather for his eloquence, than for the spirituality of the matter, *Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.* Many come to the word only to feast their ears ; they like the melody of the voice, the mellifluous sweetness of the expression, the newness of the notion, *Acts xvii. 21.* This is to love the garnishing of the dish more than the food ; this is to desire to be pleased, rather than edified. Like a woman that paints her face, but neglects her health : so they paint and adorn themselves with curious speculations, but neglect their souls health. This hearing doth neither sanctify the heart, nor the sabbath.

2. Lay aside *prejudice.*

(1.) Prejudice against the truths preached. The Sadducees were prejudiced against the do-

ctrine of the resurrection. *Luke xx. 27.*

(2.) Prejudice against the person preaching, 1 *Kings xxii. 8. There's one Micaiah by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him.* This hinders the virtue of the word. If a patient hath an ill opinion of his physician, he will not take any of his receipts, tho' never so good. Prejudice in the mind is like an obstruction in the stomach, which hinders the nutritive virtue of the meat. Prejudice poisons the word, and makes it to lose its efficacy.

3. Lay aside covetousness. Covetousness is not only getting the world unjustly, but loving it inordinately : this is a great hinderance to the word preached. The seed which fell among thorns was choked, *Matth. xiii. 22.* An emblem of the word being preached to a covetous hearer. The covetous man is thinking on the world when he is hearing ; his heart is in his shop, *Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.* A covetous hearer derides the word, *Luke xvi. 14. The Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.*

4. Lay aside partiality. Partiality in hearing

ing is, when we like to hear some truths preached, but not all. We love to hear of heaven, but not of self-denial; of reigning with Christ, but not of suffering; of the more facile duties of religion, but not them which are more knotty and difficult; as mortification, laying the ax to the root, and hewing down their beloved sin, *Isa. xxx. 10. Prophecy smooth things*, such as may not grate upon our conscience. Many like to hear of the love of Christ, but not of loving their enemies; they like the comforts of the word, but not the *reproofs*. Herod heard *John Baptist* gladly: he liked many truths, but not when he spake against his incest. Lay aside partiality.

5. Lay aside censoriousness. Some, instead of judging themselves for sin, sit as judges upon the preacher: either his sermon had too much gall in it, or it was too long. These will sooner censure a sermon than practise it. God will judge the judger, *Matth. vii. 1.*

6. Lay aside disobedience, *Rom. vii. 22. All the day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient people.* 'Tis spoken of the Jews; God stretched out his hands in the preaching of the word, but they rejected Christ. Let there be none among you that wilfully refuse the counsels of the word; it is sad to have an adder's ear, an adamant heart, *Zech. vii. 11, 12.* If, when God speaks to us in his word, we are deaf; when we speak to him in prayer, he will be dumb.

III. If you would hear the word aright, have good ends in hearing; *Come to the word to be made better.* Some have no other end in hearing, but because it is in fashion, or to gain repute, or stop the mouth of conscience: but come to the word to be made more holy. There's a great deal of difference between one that goes to a garden for flowers to wear in her bosom, and another that goes for flowers to make syrups and medicines of. We should go to the word for a medicine to cure us; as *Naaman the Syrian* went to *Jordan* to be healed of his leprosy, *1 Pet. ii. 2. Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.* Come to the word to be changed into the similitude of it; as the seal leaves the print upon the wax, so labour that the word preached may leave the print of its own holiness upon your heart: labour that the word may have such a virtue upon you, as the water of jealousy, to kill, and make fruitful, *Numb. v. 27.*

That it may kill your sins, and make your souls fruitful in grace.

IV. If you would hear the word aright, come to it with delight. The word preached is a feast of fat things: with what delight do men come to a feast? the word preached appoints the blind eye, mollifies the rocky heart; it beats off our fetters, and turns us from the power of Satan to God, *Acts xxvi. 18.* The word is the seed of regeneration, *James i. 18.* the engine of salvation. Hear the word with delight and complacency, *Jer. xv. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.* *Pf. cxix. 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.* Yea, love that word which comes most home to the conscience: bless God when your corruptions have been met with, when the sword of the Spirit hath divided between you and your sins. Who cares for that physic which will not work.

V. If you would hear the word aright, mix it with faith. Believe the verity of the word preached, that it is that word by which you must be judged; not only give credence to the word preached, but learn to apply it to your own souls: faith concocts the word, and turns it into spiritual nourishment. Many hear the word, but it may be said of them, as *Pf. cvi. 24. They believed not his word.* As *Melancthon* once said to some of the *Italians*, *Ye Italians worship God in the bread, when ye do not believe him to be in heaven:* so, many hear God's word, but do not believe that God is; they question the truth of his oracles. If we do not mix faith with the word, it is like leaving out the chief ingredient in a medicine, which makes it ineffectual: unbelief hardens men's hearts against the word, *Acts xix. 9. Divers were hardened, and believed not.* Men hear many truths delivered concerning the preciousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the felicity of a glorified estate; but if through unbelief and atheism they question these truths, we may as well speak to the stones and pillars of the church as to them. That word which is not believed, can never be practised, *Ubi male creditur, ibi nec bene vivitur*, Hierom. Unbelief makes the word preached of no effect. *Heb. ix. 2. The word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* The word to an unbeliever is like *discor-*



dium put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth all its virtue. If there be any unbelievers in our congregations, what shall ministers say to God at the last day? Lord, we have preached to the people thou sentest us to, we shewed them our commission, we declared unto them the whole counsel of God, but they believed never a word we spake: we told them what would be the fruit of sin, but they would drink their sugared draught, tho' there was death in the cup: Lord, we are free from their blood. God forbid that ever ministers should make this report to God of their people. But this they must be forced to do, if people live and die in unbelief. Would you sanctify a sabbath in hearing the word aright? hear the word with faith. The apostle puts these two together, *belief and salvation*, Heb. x. 39. *We are of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

VI. If you would hear the word aright, hear it with *meek spirits*, James i. 21. Receive the word in *mansuetudine, with meekness*. Meekness is a submissive frame of heart to the word: contrary to this meekness, is fierceness of spirit, when men rise up in a rage against the word; as if the patient should be angry with the physician when he gives him a receipt to purge out his bad humours, Acts vii. 54. *When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on Stephen with their teeth.* 2 Chron. xvi. 10. *Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house.* Pride and guilt make men fret at the word: what made *Asa* storm so, but pride? he was a king, and thought he was too good to be told of his sin. What made *Cain* so angry, when God said to him, *Where is Abel thy brother?* Saith he, *Am I my brother's keeper?* What made him so touchy, but guilt? he had embrewed his hands in his brother's blood. If you would hear the word aright, lay down your passions, *Receive the word with meekness*; get humble hearts to submit to the truths delivered. God takes the meek person to be his scholar, Ps. xxv. 9. *The meek will he teach his way.* Meekness makes the word preached to be an *ingrafted word*, James i. 21. A good cion grafted into a bad stock, changeth the nature of it, and makes it bear good and generous fruit; so when the word preached is grafted into man's heart, it sanctifies them, and makes them bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness. By meekness it becomes an ingrafted word,

VII. If you would hear the word aright, be not only attentive, but retentive. Lay the word up in your memories and hearts, Luke viii. 15. *The seed on the good ground are they, who having heard the word, keep it.* The Greek word for *to keep*, signifies *to hold the word fast, that it do not run from us*. If the seed be not kept in the ground, but is presently washed away, it is sown to little purpose: so, if the word preached be not kept in your memories and hearts, it is preached in vain. Many people have memories like leaking vessels, the word goes out as fast as it comes in, how can it profit? if a treasure be put in a chest, and the chest be not lock'd, it may easily be taken out: a bad memory is like a chest without a lock, the devil can easily take out all the treasure, Luke viii. 12. *Then comes the devil, and takes away the word out of their hearts.* Labour to keep in memory the truths you hear: the things we esteem we are not so apt to forget. *Will a bride forget her jewels?* Jer. ii. 32. *Can a maid forget her ornaments?* Did we prize the word more, we should not so soon forget it: if the meat doth not stay in the stomach, but comes up as fast as we eat it, it cannot nourish: so, if the word stays not in the memory, but is presently gone, it can do the soul but little good.

VIII. If you would hear aright, practise what you hear. Practice is the life of all, Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.* Bare hearing will be no plea at the day of judgment; Lord, I have heard so many sermons. But God will say, What fruits of obedience have you brought forth? The word we preach is not only to inform you, but reform you; not only to mend your sight, but to mend your pace in the way to heaven: a good hearer is like the *belitropium*, &c. it opens and shuts with the sun, to God against sin. Now that you may sanctify a sabbath by hearing;

1. If you do not hear the word aright, you lose all your labour: how many a weary step have you taken; your body hath been crowded, your spirit faint; if you are not bettered by hearing; if you are as proud, as vain, as earthly as ever, all your hearing is lost. You would be loth to trade in vain; and why not as well to hear sermons in vain? Job ix. 29. *Why then labour I in vain?* Put this question to thy own soul? *Why labour I in vain?* why do I take

take all this pains to hear, yet have not the grace to practise it? I am as bad as ever; why then labour I in vain?

2. If you hear the word, and are not bettered by it, you are like the *Salamander* in the fire, not hotter; your hearing will increase your condemnation, *Luke xii. 47. That servant which knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.* We pity such as know not where to hear; it will be worse with such as care not how they hear. To graceless disobedient hearers every sermon will be a faggot to heat hell: it is sad to go loaded to hell with ordinances. O beg the Spirit to make the word preached effectual. Ministers can but speak to the ear, the Spirit speaks to the heart, *Acts x. 44. While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word.*

V. Having heard the word in an holy and spiritual manner, for the further sanctification of the sabbath, confer of the word. We are forbid on this day to speak our own words, *Isa. lviii. 14.* but we must speak of God's word. Speak of the sermons as you sit together; this is one part of sanctifying the sabbath. Good discourse brings holy truths into our memories, and fastens them upon our hearts; *Mal. iii.*

17. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.* There is a great power and efficacy in good discourse, *Job vi. 25. How forcible are right words?* By holy conference on a sabbath, one Christian helps to warm another when he is frozen, to strengthen another when he is weak. *Latimer* confessed, he was much furthered in religion, by having conference with Mr. *Bilney* the martyr. *Pf. cxix. 172. My tongue shall speak of thy word.* One reason why preaching the word on a sabbath doth no more good, is, because there is so little good conference. Few speak of the word they have heard, as if sermons were such secrets that they must not be spoken of again, or as if it were a shame to speak of that which will save us.

VI. Shut up the sabbath-evening with *repetition, reading, singing of psalms, and prayer*: beg that God would bless the word you have heard. But I hope your practice herein will prevent my further speaking. Could we but thus spend a sabbath, we might be *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, *Rev. i. 10.* our souls might be nourished and comforted: and this sabbath which we now keep, would be an earnest of that everlasting sabbath which we shall celebrate in heaven.

Exod. xx. 8. *Remember to keep the Sabbath-day holy.*

Use I. **S**EE here a Christian's duty, *To keep the sabbath-day holy.*

1. The whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God: It is not said, Keep a part of the sabbath holy, but the whole day must be religiously observed. If God hath given us six days, and taken but one to himself, shall we grudge him any part of that day? it were sacrilege. The *Jews* kept a whole day to the Lord, and we are not to abridge or curtail the sabbath (saith *St. Austin*) more than the *Jews* did. The very heathens, by the light of nature, did set apart a whole day in the honour of their false gods; and *Scævola* their high priest did affirm, That the wilful transgression of that day could have no expiation or pardon. Whoever do rob any part of the sabbath for servile work or recreation, *Scævola* the high priest of the heathenish gods shall rise up in judgment against such Christians, and condemn them. And they who say, that to keep a whole sabbath is too Judaical, let them shew where God has

made any abatement of the time of worship. Where he hath said, you shall keep but a part of the sabbath: and if they cannot shew that, it argues much boldness to go to rob God of his due. That a whole day be designed and set apart for God's special worship, is a perpetual statute, while the church remains upon the earth, saith *Pet. Martyr*. Of this opinion also were *Theodoret, Austin, Irenæus*, and the chief of the fathers.

2. As the whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God, so it must be kept holy; you see the manner of sanctifying the Lord's day, by reading, meditation, prayer, hearing of the word, and by singing of psalms, to make melody to the Lord. Now, besides what I have said for the keeping this day holy, let me make a short comment or paraphrase on that scripture, *Isa. lviii. 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy*



*own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:* Here is a description of the right sanctifying a sabbath.

(1.) *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath.*] That may be understood either literally, or spiritually.

*First, Literally, If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,* that is, if thou withdrawest thy foot from taking long walks or journeys on the sabbath-day: So the *Jewish* doctors expound it. Or,

*Secondly, Spiritually. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,* that is, if thou turn away thy affections (the feet of thy soul) from inclining to any worldly business.

(2.) *From doing thy pleasure on my holy day.*] That is, thou must not do that which may please the carnal part, as sports and pastimes: this is to do the devil's work on God's day.

(3.) *And call the sabbath a delight.*] Call it a delight, that is, *esteem* it so: though the sabbath be not a day for carnal pleasure, yet holy pleasure is not forbidden. The soul must take pleasure in the duties of a sabbath. The saints of old counted the sabbath a delight: the *Jews* called the sabbath *dies lucis, a day of light*. The Lord's day, on which the Sun of righteousness shines, is both a day of light and delight. This is the day of sweet intercourse between God and the soul. On this day a Christian makes his sallies out to heaven, his soul is lifted above the earth: and can this be without delight? The higher the bird flies, the sweeter it sings. On a sabbath the soul acts its love to God; and where the love is, there is the delight: on this day a believer's heart is melted, *q. d.* quickened, enlarged in holy duties; and how can all this be, and not a secret delight go along with it? On a sabbath a gracious soul can say, as *Cant. ii. 3. I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* How can a spiritual heart choose but call the sabbath a delight? Is it not delightful to a queen to be putting on her wedding robes in which she shall meet the king her bridegroom? When we are about sabbath exercises, we are dressing ourselves, and putting on our wedding-robes in which we are to meet our heavenly bridegroom the Lord Jesus: and is not this delightful? On the sabbath God makes a *feast of fat things*, he feasts the ear with his word, and the heart with his grace. Well then may we call the sabbath a delight; and so find this holy delight, is to be in the spirit on the Lord's day.

(4.) *The holy of the Lord, honourable.*] In the *Hebrew*, it is *glorious*. To call the sabbath honourable, is not to be understood so much of an outward honour given to it, by wearing richer apparel, or having better diet on his day, as the *Jewish* doctors corruptly gloss; this is the chief honour some give to this day: but thou shalt call the sabbath honourable, that is meant of the honour of the heart that we give to this day, reverencing it, and esteeming it the *queen of days*. We are to count the sabbath honourable, because God hath honoured it. *All the persons in the Trinity* have honoured it, God the Father blessed it, God the Son rose upon it, God the Holy Ghost descended on this day, *Acts ii. 1*. And indeed this day is to be honoured of all good Christians, and had in high veneration. It is a day of renown; on this day a golden sceptre of mercy is held forth. The Christian sabbath is the very *crepusculum* and dawning of the heavenly sabbath. It is honourable because this day, *God comes down to us*, and visits us. To have the king of heaven present in a special manner in our assemblies, makes the sabbath-day honourable. Besides, the work that is done on this day makes it honourable: the six days are filled up with servile work, which makes them lose much of their glory; but on this day sacred work is done. The soul is employed wholly about the worship of God; it is praying, hearing, meditating; it is doing angels work, praising, and blessing of God. Again, the day is honourable by virtue of a *divine institution*: silver is of itself valuable; but when the royal stamp is put upon it, it is honourable; so God hath put a sacred stamp upon this day, the stamp of *divine authority*, and the stamp of *divine benediction*: this makes it honourable; this is a sanctifying the sabbath, to call it a *delight*, and honourable.

(5.) *Not doing thy own ways.*] That is, thou shalt not defile the day by doing any servile work.

(6.) *Nor finding thy own pleasure*] That is, not gratifying the fleshly part, by walks, visits, pastimes.

(7.) *Nor speaking thy own words.*] That is, words heterogeneous and unsuitable for a sabbath; vain, impertinent words; discourses of worldly affairs. Here is the sanctifying of a sabbath described.

*Use II,* If the sabbath-day be to be kept holy, it reproves them who, instead of sanctifying the sabbath, prophane it: They take that time,

time, which should be dedicated wholly to God, and spend it in the service of the devil and their lusts. The Lord hath enclosed this day for his own worship, and they lay this day common. God hath set an hedge about this commandment, *remember*; and they break this hedge: but he who breaks an *hedge, a serpent shall bite him*, Eccl. x. 8. The sabbath-day in England lies bleeding: and oh that our parliament would pour in some balm into the wounds which the sabbath hath received! how is this day prophaned, by sitting idle at home, by selling of meat, by vain discourse, by sinful visits, by walking in the fields, by using sports. The people of *Israel* might not gather manna on the sabbath, and may we use sports and dancings on this day? Truly it should be matter of grief to us, to see so much sabbath-prophanation. When one of *Darius's* eunuchs saw *Alexander* setting his feet on a rich table of *Darius's*, he fell a weeping: *Alexander* asked him why he wept? He said it was to see the table which his master so highly esteemed to be now made a footstool. So we may weep to see the sabbath-day, which God so highly esteems, and hath so honoured and blessed, to be made a foot-stool, and to be trampled upon by the feet of sinners. To prophane the sabbath, is a sin of an high nature; it is a *wilful contempt* of God: it is not only a casting God's law behind our back, but a trampling it under foot. God saith, *keep the sabbath holy*; but men will pollute it: this is to despise God, to hang out the flag of defiance, to throw down the gantlet, and challenge God himself. Now, how can God endure to be thus saucily confronted by proud dust? God will not suffer this high impudence to go unpunished. This will draw God's curses upon the sabbath-breaker, and God's curse will blast where it comes. No sooner did Christ curse the fig-tree, but it withered: though the law of the land lets sabbath-breakers alone. To rob a man of his purse, shall be punished with death; but to rob God of his day, shall not be punished with death. But God will take the matter into his own hand; he will see after the punishing of sabbath-violation: and how doth he punish it?

1. With spiritual plagues. He gives up sabbath-prophaners to hardness of heart, and a seared conscience. Spiritual judgments are forest, *Pf. lxxxix. 12. So I gave them up to their own hearts-lusts*: A sear in the conscience is a brand-mark of reprobation.

2. God punisheth this sin of sabbath-breaking,

by giving them up to commit other sins. God, to revenge the breaking of his sabbath, suffers men to break open houses, and so come to be punished by the magistrate. How many such confessions have we heard from thieves going to be executed! they never regarded the sabbath; and so God suffered them to commit those hainous sins, for which now they are to die.

3. God punisheth sabbath-breaking, by sudden visible judgments on men for this sin; God punisheth them in their *estates*, and in their *persons*. One carrying corn into his barn on the Lord's day, both house and corn were consumed with fire from heaven. In *Wiltshire* there was a dancing match appointed upon the Lord's day; and one of the company, as he was dancing, fell down dead suddenly, and so was made a spectacle of God's justice. The *theatre of God's judgments* relates of one, who used every Lord's day to hunt in sermon-time, and he had a child by his wife with an head like a dog, and it cried like an hound. His sin was monstrous, and it was punished with a monstrous birth. The Lord threatened the *Jews*, that if they would not hallow the sabbath-day, he would kindle a fire in their gates, Jer. xvii. 27. The dreadful fire which brake out in *London*, began on the sabbath-day; as if God would tell us from heaven, he was then punishing us for our sabbath prophanation. Nor doth God punish it only in this life with death, but with damnation. Such as break God's sabbath, let them see if they can break those chains of darkness, in which they and the devils shall be held.

*Use III.* It exhorts us to sabbath-holiness.

1. Make conscience of keeping this day holy. The other commandments have only an affirmative in them or a negative: this fourth commandment hath both an affirmative in it, and a negative; *Thou shalt keep the sabbath-day holy*, and, *thou shalt not do any manner of work in it*; to show how carefully God would have us observe this day. Not only must you keep this day *yourselves*, but have a care that all under your charge keep it; *thou*, and *thy son*, and *thy daughter*, and *thy man-servant*, and *thy maid-servant*; that is, thou who art a superior, a parent or a master, thou must have a care that not only thyself sanctify the day, but those that are under thy trust and tuition. To blame are those masters of families, who are careful that their servants serve them, but have no care that they serve God; they care not though their servants should serve the devil, so long as their bodies



bodies do them service. That which St. Paul saith to *Timothy*, 1 Tim. vi. 20. *Serva depositum, Keep that which is committed to thy trust*, is of a large extension. Not only have a care of thy own soul, but have a care of the souls thou art entrusted with. See that they who are under thy charge sanctify the sabbath. God's law provided, that if a man met with an ox or an ass going astray, he should bring him back again: much more, when thou seekest the soul of thy child or servant going astray from God, and breaking his sabbath, thou shouldst bring him back again to a religious observation of this day. Now that I may press you to sabbath-sanctification, consider,

(1.) God hath promised great blessings to the strict observers of this day. 1. A promise of joy, *Pf. xxxvii.* 4. If this be a delight, *Isa. lviii.* 14. *Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.* Delighting in God is both a duty and a reward. In this text it is a reward, *Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord*: as if God had said, if thou keep the sabbath conscientiously, I will give thee that which will fill thee with delight; if thou keepest the sabbath willingly, I will make thee keep it joyfully: I will give thee those enlargements in duty, and that inward comfort, as shall abundantly satisfy thee; thy soul shall overflow with such a stream of joy, that thou

shalt say, Lord, in keeping thy sabbath there is great reward. 2. Of honour. And, *I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.* That is, I will advance thee to honour, *ascendere faciam*; so *Munster* interprets it. Some, by the *high places of the earth*, understand *Judea*: So *Grotius*. I will bring thee into the land of *Judea*, which is higher situated than the other countries adjacent. 3. Of earth and heaven, *And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob*; that is, I will feed thee with all the delicious things of *Canaan*, and afterwards I'll translate thee to heaven, whereof *Canaan* was but a type. And another promise, *Isa. lvi.* 2. *Blessed is the man that doth this, that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it. Blessed is the man*; in the Hebrew, it is, *bleffednesses*. To him that keeps the sabbath holy, here is blessedness upon blessedness belongs to him; he shall be blessed with the upper and nether springs; he shall be blessed in his name, estate, soul, progeny. Who would not keep this sabbath from polluting it, that shall have so many blessings entailed upon him and his posterity after him?

(2.) A conscientious keeping the sabbath, seasons the heart for God's service all the week after. Christian, the more holy thou art on a sabbath, the more holy thou wilt be on the week following.



## OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

HAVING done with the first table, I am next to speak of the duties of the second table. The commandments may be likened to *Jacob's* ladder; the first table, as the top of his ladder, reacheth to heaven, it respects God: the second table as the foot of the ladder, rests on the earth; it respects superiors and inferiors. By the first table, we walk religiously towards God, by the second we walk righteously towards man. He cannot be good in the first table that is bad in the second. Honour thy father and thy mother.

In this, (1.) A commandment, *honour thy father and thy mother*.

(2.) A reason annexed to it, *That thy days may be long in the land.*

1. The command, *Honour thy father.*

Qu. *What is meant here by father?*

Ans. Father is taken several ways; the Political, Ancient, Spiritual, Oeconomical, Natural.

1. The *Political* father, the *Magistrate*. He is father of his country; he is to be an encourager of virtue, a punisher of vice, a father to the widow and orphan: such a father was *Job*, ch. xxix. 16. *I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not, I searched out.* And, as magistrates are fathers, so especially the king, who is the head of magistrates, is a *political* father: he is placed

placed as the sun among the lesser stars. The scripture calls kings *fathers*, *Isa. xlix. 23. Kings shall be thy nursing fathers*. They are to nurse up their subjects in piety, by their good edicts and examples; and to nurse them up in peace and plenty. Such nursing fathers were *David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Constantine, Theodosius*. It is happy for a people who have such nursing fathers, whose breasts milk comfort to their children. These fathers are to be honoured: for,

(1.) Their place deserves honour. God hath set these political fathers to preserve order and harmony in a nation, and to prevent those state-convulsions, which otherwise might ensue, *Judges xvii. 6. When there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes*. A wonder, *Prov. xxx. 27*.

(2.) God hath promoted kings, that they may promote justice. As they have a sword in their hand, to signify their power; so a sceptre, an emblem of justice. It is said of *Marcus Aurelius*, emperor, that he allotted one hour of the day to hear the complaints of such as were oppressed. Kings place judges as cherubims about the throne, for distribution of justice. These political fathers are to be honoured; *Honour the king, 1 Pet. ii. 17*. And this honour is to be shown by a civil respect to their persons, and a cheerful submission to their laws, so far as they agree and run parallel with God's law. Kings are to be prayed for, which is a part of that honour we give them, *1 Tim. ii. 1. I exhort, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, be made for kings, that we may lead a quiet, peaceable life under them, in all godliness and honesty*. We are to pray for kings, that God would honour them to be blessings, that under them we may enjoy the gospel of peace, and the peace of the gospel. How happy was the reign of *Numa Pompilius*, when the swords were beaten into plough-shares, and the bees made their hives of the soldiers' helmets!

Secondly, There is the grave, antient father, who is venerable for old age; whose gray hairs are resembled to the white flowers of the almond-tree, *Eccl. xii. 5*. These are fathers for seniority, on whose wrinkled brows, and in the furrows of whose cheeks is pictured the map of old age. These fathers are to be honoured, *Lev. xix. 32. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man*. Especially, those are to be honoured who are fathers not only for their seniority, but

their piety; whose souls are flourishing, when their bodies are a-decaying. 'Tis a blessed sight to see the springs of grace in the autumn of old age; to see men stooping towards the grave, yet going up the hill of God; to see them lose their colour, yet keep their flavour. Such, whose silver hairs are crowned with righteousness, are worthy of double honour: they are to be honoured, not only as pieces of antiquity, but as patterns of virtue. If you see an old man fearing God, whose grace shines brightest when the sun of his life is setting, O honour him as a father, by reverencing and imitating him.

Thirdly, There are spiritual fathers, as *pastors and ministers*. These are the instruments of the *New birth*, *1 Cor. iv. 15. Though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel*. The spiritual fathers are to be honoured,

1. In respect of their office. Whatever their persons are, their office is honourable; they are the *Messengers of the Lord of Hosts*, *Mal. ii. 7*. They represent no less than God himself, *2 Cor. v. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ*. Jesus Christ was of this calling; he had his mission and sanction from heaven, *John viii. 18*. and this crowns the ministerial calling with honour.

2. *Ministers*, these spiritual fathers, are to be honoured for their work's sake; they come, like the dove, with an olive-branch in their mouth; they preach glad tidings of peace: their work is to save souls. Other callings have only to do with men's bodies or estates, but the minister's calling is employed about the souls of men. Their work is to redeem spiritual captives, and turn men from the power of Satan to God, *Acts xxvi. 18*. Their work is to enlighten them who sit in the region of darkness, and make them shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven. These spiritual fathers are to be honoured for their work's sake, and this honour is to be shown three ways,

1. By giving them respect, *1 Thess. v. 12. Know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*. I confess, the scandalous lives of some ministers have been a great reproach, and have made the offering of the Lord to be abhorred in some places of the land. The leper in the law was to have his lip covered; such as are argels by office,



office, but lepers in their lives, ought to have their lips covered, and to be silenced. But though some deserve *no honour*, yet such as are faithful, and make it their work to bring souls to Christ, are to be revered as spiritual fathers. *Obadiab honoured the prophet Elijah*, 1 Kings xviii. 17. Why did God reckon the tribe of *Levi* for the first-born? *Numb. iii. 12.* Why did he appoint that the prince should ask counsel of God by the priest? *Numb. xxvii. 21.* Why did the Lord shew, by that miracle of *Aaron's rod flourishing*, that he had chosen the tribe of *Levi to minister before him*? *Numb. xvii.* Why doth Christ call his apostles *the lights of the world*? why doth he say to all his ministers, *Lo, I am with you to the end of the world*; but because he would have these spiritual fathers revered? In antient times the *Egyptians* chose their king out of their priests. They are far from showing this respect and *honour* to their spiritual fathers, who have slight thoughts of such as have the charge of the sanctuary, and do minister before the Lord. *Know them*, saith the apostle, *which labour among you*. Many can be content to know their ministers in their infirmities, and are glad when they have any thing against them; but not to know them in the apostle's sense, so as to give them *double honour*. Surely, were it not for the ministry, you would not be a vineyard, but a desert: were it not for the ministry, you would be destitute of the two seals of the covenant, baptism and the Lord's supper; you would be infidels; *For faith comes by hearing; and how shall they hear without a preacher*, Rom. x. 14.

2. Honour the ministers, these spiritual fathers, by becoming *advocates* for them, and wiping off those slanders and calumnies which are unjustly cast upon them, 1 Tim. v. 19. *Constantine* was a great *honourer* of the ministry; he vindicated them; he would not read the envious accusations brought in against them, but did burn them. Do the ministers open their mouths to God for you in prayer, and will not you open your mouths in their behalf? Surely, if they labour to preserve you from hell, you should preserve them from slander; if they labour to save your souls, you ought to save their credit.

3. Honour them, by conforming to their doctrine. This is the greatest honour you can put upon your spiritual fathers, by believing and obeying their doctrine. He is an honourer of

the ministry, who is not only an *hearer*, but a *follower* of the word. As disobedience reproacheth the ministry, so obedience honoureth it. The apostle calls his *Thessalonians* his *crown*, 1 Thess. ii. 19. *What is our crown of rejoicing, are not ye?* A thriving people are a minister's crown, when there is a metamorphosis, a change wrought: people came to the word proud, but they go away humble; they came earthly, but they go away heavenly; they came, as *Naaman to Jordan*, lepers; but they go away healed. This is an honour to the ministry, 2 Cor. iii. 1. *Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation?* Though other ministers might need letters of commendation, yet *Paul* needed none: for, when men should hear of the obedience of these *Corinthians*, which was wrought in them by *Paul's* preaching; this was a sufficient *certificate* for him, that God had blessed his labours. The *Corinthians* were a sufficient honour to him; they were his letters-testimonial. You cannot honour your spiritual fathers more, than by thriving under their ministry, and living upon those sermons which they preach.

Fourthly, There is the *oeconomical father*, that is, the *master*: he is *pater familias*, the *father of the family*; therefore *Naaman's* servants called their master, *father*, 2 Kings v. 13. And the *centurion* calls his servant, *son*, Matth. viii. 6. The servant is to honour his *master*, as the father of the family. Tho' the master be not so exactly qualified as he should; yet the servant must not neglect his duty, but show some kind of honour to him.

(1.) In obeying his master in *licitis & honestis*, in things that are lawful and honest, 1 Pet. ii. 18. *Servants, be subject to your masters: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.* God hath no where given a charter of exemption to free you from your duty. You cannot disobey your earthly master, but you disobey your master in heaven. Think not that birth, or high parts, no, nor yet your grace, will exempt you from obedience to your master: to obey him, is an ordinance of God; and the apostle saith, *Whosoever resisteth the ordinance, shall receive to themselves damnation*, Rom. xiii. 2.

(2.) The servant's honouring of his master (his *oeconomical father*) is seen in being diligent in his service. *Apelles* painted a servant with his hands full of tools, an emblem of diligence. The loitering servant is a kind of thief;

thief; tho' he doth not steal from his master's goods, yet he steals that time which he should have employed in his master's service. The slothful servant is called a *wicked servant*, Matth. xxv. 26.

(3.) The servant is to honour his master, who is his family-father, by being *faithful*, Matth. xxiv. 45. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant?* Faithfulness is the chief thing in a servant. This faithfulness in a servant is seen in six things; 1<sup>st</sup>. In *tenaciousness* in concealing the secrets your master hath intrusted you with: if those secrets are not sins, you ought to promise privacy. What is whispered in your ear you are not to publish on the house-top; such servants are spies. Who would keep a glass that is cracked? who would keep a servant that hath a crack in his brain, and cannot keep a secret? 2<sup>dly</sup>. Faithfulness in a servant is seen in *designing* the master's advantage. A faithful servant esteems his master's good as his own. Such a good servant had *Abraham*; when his master sent him to transact business for him, he was as careful about it, as if it had been his own, *Gen. xxiv. 12. O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day; and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.* Doubtless *Abraham's* servant was as glad he had got a wife for his master's son, as if he had got a wife for himself. 3<sup>dly</sup>. Faithfulness in a servant is seen in *standing up for the honour* of his master. When he hears him spoken against, he must vindicate him. As the master is careful of the *servant's body*, so the servant should be careful of the *master's name*: when the master is unjustly reproached, the servant cannot be excused if he be possessed with a dumb devil. 4<sup>thly</sup>. Faithfulness is when a servant is *true to his word*. He dares not tell a lie, but will speak the truth, tho' it be against himself. A lie doubles the sin, *Pf. ci. 7. He that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.* A liar is near a-kin to the devil, *John viii. 44.* And who would let any of the devil's kindred live with him? The lie that *Gehazi* told his master *Elisha*, entailed a leprosy on *Gehazi* and his seed for ever, *2 Kings v. 22.* A faithful servant, his tongue is the true

index of his heart. 5<sup>thly</sup>. Faithfulness is, when a servant is against *impropriation*. He dares not convert his master's goods to his own use, *Tit. ii. 10. Not purloining.* What a servant filcheth from his master, is damnable gain. The servant who enricheth himself by stealing from his master, stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. 6<sup>ly</sup>. Faithfulness is in preserving the master's person, if unjustly in danger. *Banister*, who betrayed his master the duke of *Buckingham*, in *King Richard the Third's* reign; it is remarkable how the judgments of God befel that traitorous servant: his eldest son ran mad; his daughter, of a singular beauty, was suddenly struck with leprosy; his younger son was drowned, and he himself arraigned, and had been executed, had he not been saved by his clergy. That servant who is not true to his master, will never be true to God or his own soul.

(4.) The servant is to honour his master, by serving him, as with love (for willingness is more than the work) so with silence, that is, without repining, and without replying, *Tit. ii. 9. Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, not answering again, Gr. not giving cross answers.* Some servants are quick at speech, tho' slow at work; and, instead of being sorry for a fault, they provoke by unbecoming language: were the heart more humble, the tongue would be more silent. They are the apostle's words, *not answering again.* And to those servants who do thus honour their masters, or family-fathers, by submission, diligence, faithfulness, love, and humble silence, for their encouragement let them take that, *Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.* In serving your masters, you serve Christ; and he will not let you lose your labour, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. From serving on earth, you shall be taken up to reign in heaven, and shall sit with Christ upon his throne, *Rev. iii. 21.*

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Exod. xx. 12. Honour thy Father and thy Mother, &c.

**I**F we are not just, we cannot be holy. Having shown you how servants are to

honour their masters, the fathers of families; I shall next show how masters are to carry it  
L I towards



towards their servants, that they may gain honour from them.

1. In general, masters must remember that they have a master in heaven, who will call them to account, *Eph. vi. 9. Knowing that your Master is also in heaven.*

2. More particularly.

(1.) Masters must have a care to provide for their servants: as they cut them out work, so they must give them their meat in due season, *Luke xvii. 7.* And the food should be wholesome and sufficing. It is an unworthy thing in some governors of families, to lay out so much upon their own backs, as to pinch their servants bellies.

(2.) Masters should encourage their servants in their work, by commending them when they do well: tho' a master is to tell a servant of his faults, yet he is not always to beat upon one string, but sometimes take notice of that which is praise-worthy. This makes a servant more cheerful in his work, and gains the master love from his servant.

(3.) Masters must not over-burden their servants, but proportion their work to their strength: if you lay too much load on a servant, he will faint under it. Christianity teacheth compassion.

(4.) Masters must endeavour the spiritual good of their servants, they must be *Seraphims* to kindle their love to religion; they must be monitors to put them in mind of their souls, they must bring them to the pool of the sanctuary, waiting till the angel stir the waters, *John v. 4.* They must seek God for them, that their servants may be his servants; they must allow them time convenient for secret devotion. Some masters are cruel to the souls of their servants; they look that they do the work about the house, but abridge them of time they should employ in working out salvation.

(5.) Masters should use mild gentle behaviour towards servants, *Eph. vi. 9. Forbearing threatening.* *Lev. xxv. 43. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but fear thy God.* It requires wisdom in a master to know how to keep up his authority, yet lay down his austerity: we have a good copy to write after; our Master in heaven is slow to anger, and of great mercy, *Pf. cxlv. 8.* Some masters are so harsh and implacable, that they are enough to spoil a good servant.

(6.) Be very exact and punctual in the compacts and agreements you make with your ser-

vants; do not prevaricate, keep not back any of their wages, nor deal deceitfully with them, as *Laban* did with *Jacob*, changing his wages. *Gen. xxxi. 7.* Falseness in promise is as bad as false weights.

(7.) Be careful of your servants, not only in health but in sickness. They have got their sickness in your service; use what means you can for their recovery: be not like the *Amalakeite*, who forsook his servant when he was sick, *1 Sam. xxx. 13.* but be as the good centurion, who kept his sick servant, and sought to Christ for a cure, *Matth. viii. 6.* If you have a beast that falls sick, you will not turn it off, but have it looked to, and pay for its cure; will you be kinder to your horses than to your servants? Thus should masters (the fathers of the family) carry themselves prudently and piously, that they may gain honour from their servants, and may give up their accounts to God with joy.

*Fifthly*, The natural father, the father of the flesh, *Heb. xii. 9. Honour thy natural father.* This is so necessary a duty, that *Philo* the Jew placed the fifth commandment in the first table, as tho' we had not performed our whole duty to God, till we had paid this debt of honour to our natural parents. Children are the vineyard of the parent's planting; and honour done to the parent, is some of the fruit of the vineyard.

*Qu. Wherein are children to show their honour to their parents?*

*Ans.* 1. In a reverential esteem of their persons: they must give them a civil veneration. Therefore, when the apostle speaks of fathers of our bodies, he speaks also of giving them reverence, *Heb. xii. 9.* This veneration or reverence must be shown,

1. Inwardly, by fear mixed with love, *Lev. xix. 3. Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.* In the commandment the father is named first, here the mother is named first, (1.) Partly to put the honour upon her the mother, because, by reason of many weaknesses incident to her sex, she is apt to be more slighted by children. And, (2.) Partly, because the mother endures more for the child; therefore, here God gives the mother the priority, names her first, *Ye shall fear every one his mother and his father.*

2. Reverence must be shown to parents outwardly, viz. In word and gesture.

(1.) In word: and that either in speaking to parents, or speaking of them.

*First,*

*First*, Reverence in speaking to *parents* : children must speak to *parents* respectively, and in decent language, 1 *Kings* ii. 20. *Ask on, my mother*, said king *Solomon* to his mother *Bathsheba*.

*Secondly*, Reverence in speaking of *parents* : children must speak of their *parents* honourably; they ought to speak well of them, if they deserve well, *Prov.* xxxi. 28. *Her children rise up, and call her blessed*. And, in case a parent bewrays weakness and indiscretion, the child should make the best of it, and, by his wife apologies for his father, cover his father's nakedness.

(2.) In Gesture. Children are to show their reverence to their *parents* by submissive behaviour, by uncovering the head; bending the knee. *Joseph*, though he was a great prince, and his father grown poor, yet he bowed to him, and behaved himself as humbly, as if his father had been the prince, and he the poor man, *Gen.* xlviii. 46. And king *Solomon*, when his mother came to him, *rose off his throne, and bowed himself to her*, 1 *Kings* ii. 19. Among the *Lacedemonians*, if a child had carried himself arrogantly or saucily to his father, it was lawful for the father to appoint whom he would to be his heir. O how many children are far from this, giving reverence to their parents! they despise their parents; they carry themselves with that pride and malapartness towards them, that they are a shame to religion, and bring their parents gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, *Deut.* xxvii. 16. *Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother*. If all that set light by their parents are cursed, how many children in our age are under a curse! if such as are disrespectful to their parents live to have children, they will be thorns in their sides, and God will make them read their sins in their punishment.

II. The second way of showing honour to parents, is in careful obedience, *Col.* iii. 20. *Children, obey your parents in all things*. Our Lord Christ herein set a pattern to children, *Luke* ii. 51. *He was subject to his parents*. He to whom angels were subject, yet was subject to his parents. This obedience to parents is shown three ways;

(1.) In hearkning to their counsel, *Prov.* i. 8. *Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother*. Parents are as it were in the room of God; if they would teach you the fear of the Lord, you must listen to their words as oracles, and not be as the deaf adder to stop your ears. *Eli's* sons hearkned not to

the voice of their father, 1 *Sam.* ii. 25: but they were called *sons of Belial*, *v.* 12.---And children must hearken to the counsel of their parents, as in spiritual matters, so in other affairs which relate to this life; as in the choice of a calling, and in case of entring into marriage. *Jacob* would not dispose of himself in marriage (though he was forty years old) without the advice and consent of his parents, *Gen.* xxviii. 1, 2. Children are as it were the parents proper goods and possession, and it is high injustice in a child to give away herself without the parents leave. If parents should indeed counsel a child to match with one that is irreligious or popish, I think the case is plain, and many of the learned are of opinion, that here the child may have a negative voice, and is not obliged to be ruled by the parent. Children are to marry in the Lord, 1 *Cor.* vii. 39. Therefore not with persons irreligious, for that is not to marry in the Lord.

(2.) Obedience to parents is shown in subscribing to their commands. A child should be the parents *eccho*: when the father speaks, the child should *eccho* back obedience. The *Rechabites* were forbidden by their father to drink wine; and they did obey him, and were commended for it, *Jer.* xxxv. 6. And children must obey their parents in all things, *Col.* iii. 20. Things that are more against the grain, and which they have some reluctance to; yet they must obey their parents. *Esau* would obey his father, when he commanded him to fetch him venison, because it is probable he took pleasure in hunting; but refused to obey him in a matter of greater concernment, namely in the choice of a wife. But though children must obey their parents in all things, yet *restringitur ad licita & honesta*, it is with this limitation, *things just and honest*. Obey in the Lord, *Eph.* vi. 1. that is, so far as the commands of parents agree with, and are consonant to God's commands. If they command against God, here they lose their right of being obeyed, and in this case we must unchild ourselves.

(3.) Honour is to be shown to parents, in relieving their wants. *Joseph* cherished his father in his old age, *Gen.* xlvii. 12. It is but the paying a just debt. Parents have brought up children when they were young, and children ought to nourish their parents when they are old. The young storks by the instinct of nature bring meat to the old storks, when by reason of age, they are not able to fly, *Pliny. Lex perlar-*



*gica*.---The memory of *Eneas* was honoured, for carrying his aged father out of *Troy* when it was on fire. I have read of a daughter, whose father being condemned to be starved to death, she did in prison give him suck with her own breasts; which being known to the governors, procured his freedom out of prison. To blame are such, shall I say children or monsters, who are ashamed of their parents when they are old, and fallen to decay; when parents tears and lean cheeks may plead pity, yet children have no compassion: *when they ask for bread, they give them a stone*. When houses are shut up, we say the *plague* is there: when childrens hearts are shut up against their parents, the *plague* is in those hearts. Our blessed Saviour took great care for his mother; when he was on the cross, he charged his disciple *John* to take her home to him as his mother, and see that she wanted nothing, *John* xix. 26, 27. The reasons why children should honour their parents, are,

1. It is a solemn command of God, *honour thy father, &c.* As God's word is the rule, so his will must be the reason of our obedience.

2. They deserve honour, in respect of that great love and affection which they bear to their children; and that love is evidenced both by their care and cost, (1.) Their *care* in bringing up their children; a sign their hearts are full of love, because their heads are so full of care. Parents often take more care for their children than for themselves. They take care of them when they are tender, lest like wall-fruit, they should be nipt in the bud. And as children grow older, so the care of parents grows greater: they are afraid of their children falling when young, and of worse faults when they are older. (2.) Their love is evidenced by their *cost*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 14. They lay up, and they lay out for their children; they are not like the raven or ostrich, *Job* xxxix. 14. which are cruel to their young. Parents sometimes do impoverish themselves to enrich their children: all this calls for honour from the children. Children can never parallel or equal parents love; parents are instruments of life to their children, children cannot be so to their parents.

3. To honour parents, *is well pleasing to the Lord*, Col. iii. 20. As it is joyful to the parents, so it is pleasing to the Lord. Children, is it not your desire to please God? in honouring and obeying your parents, you please God, as well as when you repent and believe. And, that you

may see how well it pleaseth God, he bestows a reward upon it, *That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. *Jacob* would not let the angel go, till he had blessed him; nor God would not part with his command till he had blessed it. Here is the blessing, *that thy days may be long in the land, &c.* St. *Paul* calls this the first commandment with promise, Eph. vi. 2. The second commandment hath a general promise of mercy; but this is the first commandment that hath a particular promise made to it, *That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. Long life is mentioned as a blessing, Ps. cxxxviii. 6. *Thou shalt see thy childrens children*. It was a great favour of God to *Moses*, that though he was an hundred and twenty years old, he needed no spectacles; his eye was not dim, nor his natural strength abated, *Deut.* xxxiv. 7. God threatned it as a curse to *Eli*, that there should not be an old man in his family, 1 *Sam.* ii. 31. Since the flood life is much abbreviated and cut short: some the womb is their tomb; others exchange their *cradle* for their *grave*; others die in the flower of their age; death serves its warrant every day upon one or other. Now, when death lies in ambush continually for us, if God satisfy us with long life, Ps. xci. 16. *With long life will I satisfy him*: this is to be esteemed a blessing. It is a blessing that God gives a long time to repent and a long time to do service, and a long time to enjoy the *comforts* of relations; and whom is this blessing of long life entailed upon, but obedient children? Honour thy father, that thy *days may be long*. Nothing sooner shortens life than disobedience to parents. *Absalom* was a disobedient son, who sought to deprive his father of his life and crown; and he did not live out half his days: the mule he rode upon, as being weary of such a burden, left him hanging in the oak betwixt heaven and earth, as not fit to tread upon the one, or enter into the other. Obedience to parents spins out thy life,---*that thy days may be long*. Nor doth obedience to parents only lengthen life but sweeten it: therefore it follows, *that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. To live long, and not to have a foot of land, is a misery; but obedience to parents settles lands of inheritance upon the child. *Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?* said *Esau*. Behold, God hath more blessings for an obedient child than one; not only shall he have a long life, but a fruitful land;

land; and not only shall he have land, but land given in love, *the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. Thou shalt have thy land not

only with God's leave, but with his love. All which are cogent arguments to make *children* honour and obey their parents.

EXOD. XX. 12. *Honour thy father-----*

Use 1. **I**F we are to honour our fathers on earth, then much more our father in heaven, *Mal. i. 6. If then I am a father, where is my honour?* A father is but the instrument of conveying life, but God is the original cause of our being, *Pf. c. 3. For it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves*. Honour and adoration is a pearl belongs only to the crown of heaven. And,

1. We show honour to our heavenly father, by obeying him. Thus Christ honoured his father, *John vi. 38. I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me*. This he calls honouring of God, *John viii. 29. I do always those things that please him, v. 49. I honour my father*. The wise men did not only bow the knee to Christ, but presented him with *gold and myrrh*, *Mat. ii. 2*. So we must not only bow the knee, give God adoration, but bring him presents, give him golden obedience.

2. We show honour to our heavenly father, by appearing advocates in his cause, and standing up for his truth in an adulterous generation. That son honours his father, who stands up in his defence, and vindicates him when he is calumniated and reproached. Do they honour God, who are ashamed of him? *John xii. 42. Many believed on him, but durst not confess him*. They are bastard-sons, who are ashamed to own their heavenly father: such as are born of God, are steeled with *courage* for his truth; they are like the rock, which no waves can break; like the adamant, which no sword can cut. *Basil* was a champion for truth in the time of the emperor *Valens*; and *Athanasius*, when the world was *Arrian*, appeared for God.

3. We show honour to our heavenly father, by ascribing the honour of all we do to him, *1 Cor. xv. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me*. If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, any strength against corruption, he rears up a pillar and writes upon it, *hitherto hath the Lord helped me*. As *Joab*, when he had fought against *Rabbah*, and had like to have taken it

sent for king *David*, that he might carry away the honour of the victory, *2 Sam. xii. 27*. So, when a child of God hath any conquest over Satan, he gives all the honour to God. Hypocrites (whose lamp is fed with the oil of vain-glory) while they do any eminent service for God, seek themselves; and so their very serving of him is a dishonouring him.

4. We show honour to our heavenly father, by celebrating his praise, *Pf. lxxi. 8. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day*. *Rev. v. 13. Blessing, honour, glory and power be unto him that sits upon the throne*. Blessing God is honouring of God: It lifts him up in the eyes of others; it spreads his fame and renown in the world. In this manner the angels, the choristers of heaven, are now honouring God, they trumpet forth his praise: in prayer, we act like saints, in praise like angels.

5. We show honour to our heavenly father, by suffering dishonour, yea death for his sake. *St. Paul* did bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, *Gal. vi. 17*. As they were the marks of honour to him, so trophies of honour to the gospel. The honour which comes to God, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him; as we do to kings, but it comes in another way by the suffering of his people: they let the world see what a good God they serve, and how they love him, and will fight under his banner to the death. Thus you see how you are to honour your heavenly father: God is worthy of honour, *Pf. civ. 1. Thou art clothed with honour and majesty*. What are all his attributes, but glorious beams shining from this sun? He deserves more honour than men or angels can give him. *2 Sam. xxii. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised*. God is worthy of honour. Often times we confer honour upon them that do not deserve it: many noble persons we give titles of honour to, who are fordid and vicious; they do not deserve honour: but God is worthy of honour, *Neh. ix. 5. Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessings and praise*. He is above



above all the acclamations and triumphs of the arch-angels. O then, let every true child of God honour his heavenly Father! Tho' the wicked dishonour him by their flagitious lives, yet let not his own children dishonour him. Sins in you are worse than in others; a fault in a stranger is not so much taken notice of, as a fault in a child: a spot in a black cloth is not so much observed; but a spot in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it: a sin in the wicked is not so much wondered at, it is a spot in black; but sin in a child of God, here is a spot in scarlet; this is more visible, and brings an odium and dishonour upon the gospel. The sins of God's own children go nearer to his heart, *Deut. xxxi. 19. When the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.* O forbear doing any thing may reflect dishonour upon God. Will you disgrace your heavenly father? Let not God complain of the provocations of his sons and daughters; let him not cry out, as *Isaiah i. 2. I have brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* So much for the first; if our earthly father be to be honoured, then much more our heavenly.

*Use II. Exhortat. First Branch.* Doth God command, *Honour thy father and thy mother?* Then let it exhort children to put this great duty in practice; be living commentaries upon this commandment. Honour and reverence your parents; not only obey their commands, but submit to their rebukes: you cannot honour your father in heaven, unless you honour your earthly parents; to deny obedience to parents, entails God's judgments upon children, *Prov. xxx. 17. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it.* Eli's two disobedient sons were slain, *1 Sam. iv. 11.* God made a law that the rebellious son should be stoned; the same death the blasphemer had, *Lev. xxiv. 14. Deut. xxi. 18. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.* A father once complaining, *Never had a father a worse son than I have:* Yes, said the son, *my grandfather had:* a prodigy of impudence that can hardly be paralleled. *Manlius*, when he was grown

old and poor, and had a son very rich, the old father desired some food of him, but the son denied him relief; yea, disclaimed him from being his father, and sent him away with reproachful language: the poor, old father lets tears fall (as witnesses of his grief.) But God, to revenge this disobedience, struck this unnatural son with madness, of which he could never be cured. Disobedient children stand in the place where all God's arrows fly.

*Second Branch.* Let parents so carry it, as they may gain honour from their children.

*Qu. How may parents so carry towards their children, that their children may willingly pay the debt of honour and reverence to their parents?*

*Ans.* If you would have your children honour you,

1. Be careful to bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, *Eph. vi. 4. Bring them up in the admonition of the Lord.* You conveyed the plague of sin to them, therefore, endeavour to get them healed and sanctified. *Austin* saith his mother *Monica* travailed more for his spiritual birth than his natural. *Timothy's* mother instructed him from a child, *2 Tim. iii. 15.* She did not only give him her breast-milk, but the sincere milk of the word. Season your children with good principles betimes, that they may, with *Obadiah*, *fear the Lord from their youth,* *1 Kings xviii. 12.* When parents instruct not their children, they seldom prove blessings. God oft punisheth the carelessness of parents with undutifulness in their children. It is not enough, that in baptism your child is dedicated to God, but it must be educated for God. Children are young plants which you must be continually watering with good instruction, *Prov. xxii. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it when he is old.* The more your children fear God, the more they will honour you.

2. If you would have your children honour you, keep up parental authority over your children; be kind, but do not cocker them: if you let them get too much head, they will condemn you, instead of honouring you. The rod of discipline must not be withheld, *Prov. xiii. 14. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell.* A child indulged and humoured in wickedness, will be a thorn in the parent's eye. *David* cockered *Adonijah*, *1 Kings i. 6. His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou*

*thou done so?* And he afterwards was a grief of heart to his father, and was false to the crown, v. 7. 9. Keep up your authority, and you keep up your honour.

3. Provide for your children what is fitting, both in their minority, and when they come to maturity, 2 Cor. xii. 14. *The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* They are your own flesh; and, as the apostle saith, *No man ever yet hated his own flesh*, Eph. v. 29. The parents bountifulness will cause dutifulness in the child. If you pour water into a pump, the pump will send water out again freely; so, if parents pour in something of their estate to their children, children (if ingenuous) will pour out obedience again to their parents.

4. When your children are grown up, put them to some lawful calling, wherein they may serve their generation. And it is good to consult the natural genius and inclination of a child; forced callings do as ill, sometimes, as forced matches. To let a child be out of a calling, is to expose it to temptation. *Melancthon, Otium balneum diaboli.* A child out of a calling, is like fallow-ground; and what can you expect should grow up but weeds of disobedience?

5. Carry it lovingly to your children: in all your counsels and commands, let them read love. Love will command honour: and how can the parent but love the child, who is his living picture, nay, part of himself? The child is the father in the second edition.

6. Carry it prudently towards your children. A great point of prudence is, when a parent doth not provoke his children to wrath, Col. iii. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

Qu. *How many ways may a parent provoke his children to wrath?*

Ans. 1. By giving them opprobrious terms, 1 Sam. xx. 30. *Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman*, said Saul to his son Jonathan. Some parents use imprecations and curses to their children: this is to provoke them to wrath. Would you have God bless your children, and do you curse them?

2. Parents provoke children to wrath, when they strike their children without a cause; or when the correction exceeds the fault. This is rather to be a tyrant than a father: Saul cast a javelin at his son to smite him, 1 Sam. xx. 33. *and his son was provoked to anger*, v. 34.

*So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger. In filium pater obtinet non tyrannicum imperium, sed basilicum*, Davenant.

3. When parents deny their children *conveniencies*; they will not let them have that which may cherish or cover nature. Some have thus provoked their children; they have stinted them, and kept them so short, that they have forced them upon indirect courses, and made them put forth their hands to iniquity.

4. When parents carry it unequally towards their children, showing more kindness to one than to another; this sometimes breeds bad blood. Tho' a parent hath a greater love to one child, yet discretion should guide affection, that he should not show more love to one than to another. *Jacob* showed more love to *Joseph* than all his children; and what did it procure, but envy of his brethren, Gen. xxxvii. 3. *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children; and when his brethren saw that, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.*

5. When a parent doth any thing which is sordid and unworthy, that which casts disgrace upon himself and his family; as to cozen, or take a false oath; this is to provoke the child to wrath. As the child should honour his father, so the father should not dishonour the child.

6. When parents lay such commands upon their children, as their children cannot perform without wronging their conscience. *Saul* commanded his son *Jonathan* to bring *David* to him, 1 Sam. xx. 3. *Fetch him to me, for he shall surely die.* *Jonathan* could not do this with a good conscience: but was provoked to anger, v. 34. *Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger.* Now, the reason why parents should show their prudence in not provoking their children to wrath, is set down, Col. iii. 21. *Lest they be discouraged*: this word *discouraged* implies three things; (1.) Grief. The parents provoking the child, the child so takes it to heart, that it causeth immature death. (2.) Despondency: the parent's austerity dispirits the child, and makes it unfit for service; like members of the body stupified, which are unfit for work. (3.) Contumacy and refractoriness: the child being provoked by the cruel and unnatural carriage of the parent, grows desperate, and oft studies to irritate and vex his parents; which, tho' it be evil in the child, yet the parent is accessory to it, as being the occasion of it.



7. If you would have *honour* from your children, pray much for them. Not only lay up a portion for them, but lay up a stock of prayer for them. *Monica* prayed much for her son *Austin*; and it was said, It was impossible a son of so many prayers and tears should perish. Pray that your children may be preserved from the contagion of the times: pray, that as your children bear your image in their faces, they may bear God's image in their hearts; pray they may be instruments and vessels of glory. This may be one fruit of prayer, that the child may honour a praying parent.

8. Encourage that which you see good and commendable in your children. *Virtus laudata crescit*. Commending that which is good in your children, makes them more in love with virtuous actions; and is like watering of plants, which makes them grow more. Some parents discourage the good they see in their

children, and so nip virtue in the bud, and help to damn their childrens souls. They have their childrens curses.

9. If you would have *honour* from your children, set them a good example: it makes children despise their parents, when the parents live in a contradiction to their own precepts: when they bid their children be sober, yet they themselves will be drunk: they bid their children fear God, yet are themselves loose in their lives. Oh! if you would have your children honour you, teach them by an holy example. A father is a *looking-glass* which the child oft dresseth himself by; let the glass be clear, and not spotted. Parents should observe a good decorum in their whole carriage, lest they give occasion to their children to say to them, as *Plutarch's* servant, *My master hath made a book against rash anger, but he himself is passionate*; or, as a son once said to his father, *If I have done evil, I have learned it of you*.



## OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

**I**N this commandment, (1.) Is a sin forbidden, *viz.* murder; *Thou shalt not kill.* (2.) A duty implied, *To preserve our own life, and the life of others.*

1. The sin forbidden, *murder*; *Thou shalt not kill.* Where two things are to be understood. (1.) The not injuring another. (2.) Ourselves.

I. In this, *Thou shalt not kill*, is meant the not injuring another. 1. We must not injure him in his name. 2. In his body. 3. In his soul.

(1.) We must not injure another in his name. *A good name is a precious balm*; it is a great cruelty to murder a man in his name. We injure others in their name, when we calumniate and slander them. 'Twas *David's* complaint, *Ij. xxxv. 11. They laid to my charge things which I knew not.* The primitive Christians were traduced for incest, and killing their children, as *Tertul.* *Dicimur infanticidii, incestus rei.* This is to behead others in their good name; this is an irreparable injury: no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue.

(2.) We must not injure another in his body. The life is the most precious thing; and God hath set this commandment as a fence about it, to preserve it, *Thou shalt not kill.* God made a statute, which was never to this day repealed, *Gen. ix. 6. Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* In the old law, had a man killed another unawares, he might take sanctuary; but if he had killed him willingly, tho' he did flee to the sanctuary, the holiness of the place was not to defend him, *Exod. xxi. 14. If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from my altar, that he may die.* Now, in this commandment, *Thou shalt do no murder*, all those sins are forbidden which lead to it, and are the occasions of it: as,

1. *Unlawful anger.* Anger boils up the blood in the veins, and oft produceth murder, *Gen. xlix. 6. In their anger they slew a man.*

2. *Envy.* Satan envied our first parents the robe of innocence, and the glory of paradise; therefore never left till he had procured their death. *Joseph's* brethren envied him, because his

his father loved him, and gave him a coat of divers colours; therefore take counsel to slay him, Gen. xxxvii. 20. Envy and murder are near a-kin, therefore the apostle puts them together, Gal. v. 21. *Envyings, murders.* Envy is a sin breaks both the tables at once: it begins in discontent against God, and ends in injury against man, as we see in Cain, Gen. iv. 6. 8. Envious Cain was first discontented with God, there he broke the first table; and then he fell out with his brother and slew him, there he broke the second table. Anger is sometimes soon over, like fire kindled in straw, which is quickly out; but envy is a radicated thing, and will not quench its thirst without blood, Prov. xxvii. 4. *Who is able to stand before envy?*

3. *Hatred.* The Pharisees hated Christ, because he excelled them in gifts, and had more honour among the people than they; therefore they never left till they had nailed him to the cross, and taken away his life. Hatred is a vermine lives upon blood, Ezek. xxxv. 5. *Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel.* Haman hated Mordecai, because he did not bow to him; and he presently sought revenge, he got a bloody warrant signed for the destruction of the whole race and seed of the Jews, Esther iii. 9. Hatred is ever cruel. All these sins are forbidden in this commandment, which lead the way, and are oft the occasions of this sin of murder.

Qu. *How many ways is murder committed?*

Ans. We may be said to murder another, twelve ways. (1.) With the hand; as Joab killed Abner and Amasa, 2 Sam. xx. 10. *He smote him in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels.* (2.) Murder is committed with the mind. Malice is mental murder, 1 John v. 15. *Who so hateth his brother, is a murderer.* To malign another, and wish evil against him in the heart, is a murdering him. (3.) Murder is committed with the tongue, by speaking to the prejudice of another, and causing him to be put to death. Thus the Jews killed the Lord of life, when they inveighed against him, and accused him falsely to Pilate, John xviii. 30. (4.) Murder is committed with the pen. So David killed Uriah in writing to Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the battle, 2 Sam. xi. 15. Tho' the Ammonites sword cut off Uriah, yet David's pen was the cause of his death; therefore the Lord tells David by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. xii. 9. *Thou hast killed Uriah.*

(5.) Murder is committed by plotting another's death. Thus Jezebel, tho' she did not lay hands herself upon Naboth; yet because she contrived his death, and caused two false witnesses to swear against him, and bring him within the compass of treason, she was a murderer, 1 Kings xxi. 10. (6.) Murder is committed by instilling poison into potions. Thus the wife of Commodus the emperor killed her husband, by poisoning the wine which he drank. So, many kill the children they go with, by taking such medicines, or strong purges, as prove the death of the child. (7.) By witchcraft and sorcery; a thing forbidden under the law, Deut. xviii. 10. *There shall not be found among you an inchanter, or a witch, or a consulter with familiar spirits.* (8.) By having an intention to kill another; as Herod would, under a pretence of worshipping Christ, have killed him, Matth. ii. 8. 13. So Saul, when he made David go as captain against the Philistines, designing thereby that the Philistines should have killed him, 1 Sam. xviii. 17. Saul said, *Let not my hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.* Here was intentional murder, and it was in God's account as bad as actual murder. (9.) By consenting to another's death; so Saul to the death of Stephen, Acts xxii. 20. *I also was standing by and consenting to his death.* He that gives consent is accessory to the murder. (10.) By not hindering the death of another when in our power. Pilate knew Christ was innocent, *I find no fault in him;* but he did not hinder his death; therefore he was guilty. It was not washing his hands in water, could wash away the guilt of Christ's blood. (11.) By unmercifulness. 1. By taking away that which is necessary for the sustentation of life: as, to take away those tools or utensils whereby a man gets his living, Deut. xxiv. 6. *No man shall take away the nether or the upper millstone to pledge, for he takes a man's life.* 2. By not helping him when he is ready to perish. You may be the death of another, as well by not relieving him, as by offering him violence. *Si non paveris, occidisti,* Amb. If thou dost not feed him that is starving, thou killest him. And then, how many are guilty of the breach of this commandment. (12.) By not executing the law upon capital offenders. A felon having committed six murders, the judge may be said to be guilty of five of them, because he did not execute the felon for his first offence.



The next thing I shall speak to, is, to show the aggravations of this sin of murder; As,

1. To shed the blood of another *causeless*; as, to kill another in an humour or frolick. A bee will not sting, unless provoked; but many, when they are not provoked, will take away the life of another. This makes the sin of blood more bloody. The less provocation to a sin, the greater the sin.

2. To shed the blood of another, *contrary to promise*. Thus, after the princes of *Israel* had sworn to the *Gibeonites*, that they should live, *Josh. ix. 15. Saul* slew them, *2 Sam. xxi. 1.* Here were two sins twisted together, breach of oath, and murder.

3. To take away the life of any *public person*, enhanceth the murder, and makes it greater; as, (1.) To kill a judge upon the bench, because he represents the king's person. (2.) To murder a person whose office is sacred, and comes on the King of heaven's embassy: the murdering of him may be the murdering of many. *Herod* added this sin above all, that he shut up *John Baptist* in prison, *Luke iii. 20.* then much more to behead *John* in prison. (3.) To stain one's hands with royal blood. *David's* heart smote him, because he did but cut off the lap of king *Saul's* garment, *1 Sam. xxiv. 5.* How would *David's* heart have smote him, if he had cut off *Saul's* head?

4. To shed the blood of a *near relation*, aggravates the murder, and dyes it of a deeper crimson. For a son to kill his father, is horrid. Parricides are monsters in nature. *Qui occidit patrem, plurima committit peccata in uno.* Cicero. He who takes away his father's life, committeth many sins in one; he is not only guilty of murder, but of disobedience, ingratitude, ostracism, and diabolical cruelty, *Exod. xxi. 15. He who striketh his father or mother, shall be surely put to death.* Then, how many deaths is he worthy of, that destroys his father or mother? Such a monster was *Nero*, who caused his mother *Agrippina* to be slain.

5. To shed the blood of any *righteous person*, aggravates the sin. (1.) Hereby justice is perverted. Such a person, being innocent, is unworthy of death. (2.) A saint being a public blessing, he lies in the breach to turn away wrath; so that to destroy him, is to go to pull down the pillars of a nation. (3.) He is *precious to God*, *Isa. xv. 43, 44.* He is a member of Christ's body; therefore what injury is offered

to him, is done to God himself, *Acts ix. 4.*

*Caution I.* Tho' this commandment forbids *private persons*, (*Thou shalt not kill*) to shed the blood of another (unless in their own defence) yet such as are in office must punish *public offenders*, yea, with death, else they sin. To kill an offender, is not murder, but justice. A private person sins if he draws the sword, a public person sins if he puts up the sword. A magistrate ought not to let the sword of justice rust in the scabbard. As the magistrate should not let the sword be too sharp by severity, so neither should the edge of it be blunted by too much lenity.

*Caution II.* Neither doth this commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*, prohibit a *just war*. When mens sins grow ripe, and long plenty hath bred surfeit, then God saith, *Sword, go through the land*, *Ezek. xv. 14.* God did abet the war between the tribes of *Israel* and *Benjamin*: when the iniquity of the *Amorites* was full, then God sent *Israel* to commence a war against them, *Judges xi. 21.*

*Use I. Lamentation*, That this land is so defiled with blood, *Numb. xxxv. 33.* How common is this sin in this hectoring age! *England's* sins are written in letters of blood. Some make no more of killing men, than sheep, *Jer. ii. 34. In thy skirts is found the blood of the poor innocents.* *Junius* reads it, in *alis*; and so in *Hebrew*, in thy wings is found the blood of innocents. It alludes to the birds of prey, which stain their wings with the blood of other birds. May not the Lord justly take up a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *blood toucheth blood*? *Hos. iv. 2.* There is a concatenation, a plurality of murders. And that which may increase our lamentation, is, That not only man's blood is shed among us, but *Christ's blood*. Such as are profane flagitious sinners are said to crucify the son of God afresh, *Heb. vi. 6.* (1.) They swear by his blood, and so do as it were make his wounds bleed afresh. (2.) Crucify Christ in his members, *Acts ix. 5. Why persecutest thou me?* The foot being trodden on, the head cried out. (3.) If it lay in their power, were Christ alive on earth, they would nail him again to the cross: thus men crucify Christ afresh; and, if man's blood doth so cry, how loud will Christ's blood cry against sinners?

*Use II.* Beware of having your hands imbrewed in the blood of others.

Obj. But

Obj. *But such a one hath wronged me by defamation, or otherways; and if I spill his blood, I do but revenge my own quarrel.*

Ans. If he hath done you wrong, the law is open; but take heed of shedding blood. What, because he hath wronged you, will you therefore wrong God? Is it not a wrong to God, to take his work out of his hand? He hath said, *vengeance is mine, and I will repay*, Rom. xii. 19. But you will take upon you to revenge yourself: you will be both plaintiff, and judge, and executioner, yourself. This is an high wrong done to God, and he will not hold you guiltless. Now, to deter all from having their hands defiled with blood, consider what a sin murder is.

1. A *God-affronting-sin*: it is a breach of his commandment, trampling upon God's royal edict: It is a wrong offered to God's Image, Gen. ix. 6. *In the image of God made he man.* It is a tearing God's picture, and breaking in pieces the king of heaven's broad-seal. Man is the temple of God, 1 Cor. vi. 19. *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?* So that the man-slayer destroys God's temple: and will God endure to be thus confronted by proud dust?

2. It is a *crying sin*. *Clamitat in coelum vox sanguinis*---There are three sins in scripture said to cry. (1.) *Oppression*, Ps. xii. 5. (2.) *Sodomy*, Gen. xviii. 21. (3.) *Blood-shed*. This cries so loud, that it drowns all the other cries, Gen. iv. 10. *The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.* Abel's blood had as many tongues as drops to cry aloud for vengeance. This sin of blood lay heavy on David's conscience: though he had sinned by adultery, yet that he cried out of most was, this crimson sin of blood, Ps. li. 14. *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.* Though the Lord visits for every sin, yet he will in a special manner make *inquisition for blood*, Ps. ix. 12. If a beast did kill a man, the beast was to be stoned, and *his flesh must not be eaten*, Exod. xxi. 28. If God would have a beast stoned that killed a man, who had not the use of reason to restrain him, then much more will he be incensed against those, who go both against reason and conscience in spoiling the life of a man.

3. Murder is a *diabolical sin*: It makes a man

the devil's first born: he was a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44. By saying to our first parents, *Ye shall not die*, he brought in death to the world.

4. It is a *curfed sin*. If there be a curse for him that smites his neighbour secretly, Deut. xxvii. 24. then he is doubly cursed that kills him. The first man that was born was a murderer, Gen. iv. 11. *And now art thou cursed from the earth.* He was an excommunicated person, banished from the place of God's public worship. God set a mark upon bloody Cain, Gen. iv. 15. Some thought it was *horror of mind*, which (above all sins) doth accompany the sin of blood. Others think this *mark* was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh, which was a mark of infamy God set upon him. He carried a curse along with him.

5. It is a *wrath-procuring sin*, 2 Kings xxiv. 4.

(1.) It procures *Temporal judgments*. Phocas, to get the empire, put to death all the sons of *Mauricius* the emperor, and then slew him: but this Phocas was pursued by his son-in-law *Priscus*, who cut off his ears and feet, and then killed him. Charles IX. who caused the massacre of so many Christians at *Paris*, blood issued out at several parts of his body, of which he died. *Albonia* killed a man and then made a cup of his skull to drink in: afterwards his own wife caused him to be murdered in his bed. Vengeance as a blood-hound pursues the murderer: *bloody men shall not live out half their days*, Ps. lv. 23.

(2.) It brings *eternal judgments*. It binds men over to hell. The *papists* make nothing of massacres; theirs is a *bloody religion*: they dispense with men for murder, so it be to propagate the catholic cause. If a cardinal put his red hat upon the head of a murderer going to execution, he is saved from death. But let all impenitent murderers read their doom, Rev. xxi. 8. *Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone*: this is the *second death*: we read of *fire mingled with blood*, Rev. viii. 7. Such as have their *hands full of blood*, must undergo the wrath of God. Here is fire mingled with blood, and this fire is *inextinguishable*, Mark ix. 44. Time will not *finish* it, tears will not *quench* it.



EXOD. XX. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

(3.) **WE** must not injure another's *soul*. This is the greatest murder of all, because there is more of God's image in the soul than in the body. The soul, though it cannot be annihilated, is said to be murdered, because it misseeth of happiness, and is for ever in torment. Now, how many are soul-murderers?

1. Such as corrupt others by bad example. *The world is led by example*; especially the examples of great ones are very *pernicious*---We are apt to do as we see others *before* us, especially *above* us. Such as are placed in high power, are like the *pillar of cloud*; when *that went*, Israel *went*: when great ones move in their sphere, others will follow them, though it be to hell. Evil magistrates, like the tail of the dragon, draw the *third part of the stars after them*.

2. Such as *entice* others to sin. The *harlot*, by curling her hair, rolling her eyes, laying open her breasts, doth what in her lies to be both a tempter and a murderer: such an one was *Messalina*, wife to *Claudius* the emperor, *Prov. vii. 7, 10. I discerned a young man, and there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot; so she caught him, and kissed him.* Better are the reproofs of a friend, than the kisses of an harlot.

3. *Ministers* are murderers, who either *starve*, or *poison*, or *infect* souls.

(1.) That *starve* souls, 1 *Pet. v. 2. Feed the flock of God which is among you.* These feed themselves, and starve the flock: either through non-residing, they do not preach, or through insufficiency they cannot. There are many in the ministry (a shame to speak it) so ignorant, that they had need to be taught the *first principles* of the *oracles of God*, *Heb. v. 12.* Was not he fit to be a preacher in *Israel* (think ye) who being asked something concerning the decalogue, answered, he never saw any such book?

(2.) That *poison* souls. Such are *heterodox* ministers, who poison people with error: the basilisk poisons herbs and flowers, by breathing on them: the breath of heretical ministers, like the basilisk's breath, poisons souls. The *Socinian*, that would rob Christ of his godhead; the *Arminian*, that by advancing the power

of the will, would take off the crown from the head of free grace; the *Antinomian*, who denies the use of the moral law to a believer, as if it were antiquated and out of date; these poison mens souls. Error is as damnable as vice, 1 *Pet. ii. 1. There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them.*

(3.) That *infect* souls, viz. by their *scandalous lives*, *Exod. xix. 22. Let the priests which come near to the Lord sanctify themselves.* Ministers, who by their places are *nearer* to God, should be holier than others. The elements, the higher they are, the purer: the air is purer than the water; the fire is purer than the air. The higher men are by office, the holier they should be; *John Baptist* was a *shining lamp*. But there are many who infect their people with their bad life; they preach one thing, and live another.

*Qui curios simulant & bacchanalia vivunt.*

They, like *Eli's* sons, are in white linen, but they have scarlet sins. Some say, that *Prestor John*, the lord of *Africa*, causeth to be carried before him a golden cup full of dirt: a fit emblem of such ministers as have a golden office, but are dirty and polluted in their lives. They are murderers, and the *blood of souls will cry against them* at the last day.

(4.) Such as destroy others, by getting them into *bad company*, and so making them proselytes to the devil. *Vitia in proximum quemq; transliunt*, *Sen.* A man cannot live in the *Ethiopian* climate but he will be discoloured with the sun, nor he cannot be in bad company, but he will partake of their evil. One drunkard makes another; as the prophet speaks in another sense, *Jer. xxxv. 5. I set before them pots full of wine and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine; so the wicked set pots of wine before others, and make them drink till reason be stupefied, and lust inflamed.* These are guilty of the breach of this commandment, they are murderers of souls. How sad will it be with these, who have not only their *own sins*, but the *blood of others*, to answer for? So much for the first thing forbidden in the commandment, the injuring of others.

II. The

II. The second thing forbidden in it is, the injuring *one's self*. *Thou shalt not kill*: thou shalt do no hurt to thy self.

(1.) Thou shalt not hurt thy *own body*. One may be guilty of self-murder, either 1. Indirectly and occasionally. Or, 2. Directly and absolutely.

1. *Indirectly and occasionally*; as,

*First*, When a man thrusts himself into danger which he might prevent: as if a company of archers were shooting, and one should go and stand in the place where the arrows fly; if the arrow did kill him, he is accessory to his own death. In the law, God would have the leper shut up, to keep others from being infected, *Lev. xiii. 4*. Now, if any would be so presumptuous as to go in to the leper, and get the plague of leprosy, he might thank himself, he occasioned his own death.

*Secondly*, A person may be in some sense guilty of his own death, by neglecting the use of means. If sick, and use no physic; if he hath received a wound and will not apply balsom, he hastens his own death. God appointed *Hezekiah* to lay a lump of figs to the boil, *Isa. xxxviii. 21*. If he had not used the lump of figs, he had been the cause of his own death.

*Thirdly*, By *immoderate grief*, *2 Cor. vii. 10*. *the sorrow of the world worketh death*; when God takes away a dear relation, and one is swallowed up with sorrow. How many weep themselves into their graves! queen *Mary* grieved so excessively for the loss of *Calais*, that it broke her heart.

*Fourthly*, By *intemperance, excess in diet*. Surfeiting shortens life: *plures periere crapula, quam gladio*; many dig their grave with their teeth. Too much oil chokes the lamp: the cup kills more than the cannon. Excessive drinking causeth untimely death.

2. One may be guilty of self-murder, *directly and absolutely*.

1. By *envy*. *Envy is tristitia de bonis alienis*, a secret repining at the welfare of another.

*Invidius alterius rebus macrescit opimis*.

An envious man is more sorry at another's prosperity, than at his own adversity; he never laughs, but when another weeps. Envy is a self-murder, a fretting canker. *Cyprian* calls it *vulnus occultum*, a secret wound; it hurts a man's self most. Envy corrodes the heart, dries up the blood, rots the bones, *Prov. xiv. 30*. *Envy is the rottenness of the bones*. It is to the body, as the moth to the cloth, it eats it, and

makes its beauty consume: envy drinks its own venome. The viper, which leap'd on *Paul's* hand, thought to have hurt *Paul*, but fell herself into the fire, *Acts xxviii. 3*. So, while the envious man thinks to hurt another, he destroys himself.

(2.) By laying *violent hands* upon himself. and thus he is *felo de se*; as *Saul* fell upon his own sword and killed himself.

And because I see so many in the bills of mortality, who make away themselves, let me a little expatiate: it is the most unnatural and barbarous kind of murder for a man to butcher himself, and imbrew his hands in his own blood. A man's self is most near to him, therefore this sin of self-murder breaks both the *law of God*, and the *bonds of nature*. The Lord hath placed the soul in the body, as in a prison; now it is a great sin to break prison, till God by death open the door. Self-murderers are worse than the brute-creatures: they will tear and gore one another, but no beast will go to destroy it self. Self-murder is occasioned usually from discontent: discontent is joined with a sullen melancholly. The bird that beats herself in the cage, and is ready to kill herself, is the true emblem of a discontented spirit.

And this *discontentment* ariseth, (1.) From pride. A man that is swell'd with an high opinion of himself, thinks he deserves better than others; and if any cross befall him, he is discontented, and now in a sudden passion will make away himself. *Abithophel* had high thoughts of himself, his words were esteemed oracles; and to have his wise counsel rejected, he was not able to bear it, *2 Sam. xvii. 23*. *He put his house in order, and hanged himself*. (2.) From poverty. Poverty is a sore temptation, *Prov. xxx. 19*. *Give me not poverty*. Many by their sin have brought themselves to poverty; and when a great estate is boil'd away to nothing, then they are discontented, and think better to die quickly, than languish in misery: hereupon the devil helps them to dispatch themselves. (3.) From covetousness. Avarice is a dry drunkenness, an horse-leech that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like *Behemoth*, *Job xl. 23*. *Behold, he drinketh up a river, and yet his thirst is not allayed*. The covetous miser hoards up corn; and if he hears the price of corn begins to fall, then he is troubled, and there is no cure for his discontent but an halter. (4.) From horror of mind. A man hath sinned a great sin, he hath swallowed down some piles of tempta-



temptation the devil hath given him, and these pills begin to work in his conscience; and the horror is so great, that he chooseth *strangling*. Judas having betray'd innocent blood, he was in that agony, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience; as if one should, to avoid the stinging of a gnat, endure the biting of a serpent. This self-murder, is an *high breach* of this commandment, it is an *execrable sin*. I can see no ground of hope for such as make away themselves; for they die in the very act of sin, and cannot have time to repent.

(1.) Here is forbidden hurting one's *soul*: *thou shalt not kill*. Many who are free from other murder, yet are guilty here; they go about to murder their own souls; they are wilfully set to damn themselves, and throw themselves into hell.

Qu. *Who are they that go about desperately to murder their own souls?*

Ans. Such wilfully go about to murder their souls, who have no sense of God, or the other world; they are *past feeling*, Eph. iv. 19. Tell them of God's holiness and justice, they are not at all affected; Zech. vii. 12. *They made their hearts like an adamant*. The adamant, saith Pliny, is insuperable, the hammer cannot conquer it. Sinners have adamantine hearts. The altar of stone, when the prophet spake to it, *rent asunder*, 1 Kings xiii. 2. But sinners hearts are so hardned in sin, that nothing will work upon them, neither ordinances nor judgments; they do not believe a Deity, they laugh at hell: these go about to murder their souls, they are throwing themselves as fast as they can into hell.

2. Such as are set wilfully to murder their souls, are they who are *resolved* upon their lusts, let what will come of it. The soul may cry out, I am killing, I am murdering, Eph. iv. *They have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness*. Let ministers speak to them about their sins, let conscience speak, let affliction speak; yet they will have their lusts, though they go to hell for them. Are not these resolved to murder their souls? as Agrippina, mother to Nero, said, *occidat modo imperet*, let my son kill me, so he may reign; so many

say in their hearts, let our sins damn us, so they may but please us. Herod will have his incestuous lust, though it cost him his soul: men will, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath. Are not these about to massacre and damn their own souls?

3. They murder their souls, who avoid all means of saving their souls. They will go to plays, to drunken meetings; but will not set their foot within God's house, or come near the sound of the gospel-trumpet: as if one that is diseased should shun the *bath*, for fear of being healed, these do wilfully damn their souls, and are as great murderers of themselves, as he, who having means of cure offered him, chooseth death rather than physic.

4. They do voluntarily murder their souls, who suck in false prejudice against religion; as if religion were too strict and severe: they that espouse holiness, must live a melancholy life, like Hermites and Anchorites, and drown all their joy in tears. This is a slander which the devil hath cast upon religion: for there is no true joy but in *believing*, Rom. xv. 13. No honey so sweet as that which drops from a promise. Some men have foolishly taken up a prejudice against religion; they are resolved rather never to go to heaven, than to go thither through the *strait gate*. I may say of prejudice, as Paul to Elymas, Acts xiii. 10. *O prejudice, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness*, How many souls hast thou damned?

5. They are wilfully set to murder their own souls, who will neither be good to themselves, nor suffer others to be so, Mat. xxii. 13. *Ye neither go into the kingdom of heaven yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in*. Such are those that persecute others for their religion. Drunken meetings shall escape punishment; but, if men meet to serve God, then let all severity be used. These are resolved to shipwreck others, though they themselves are cast away in the storm. Oh! take heed of this, of murdering your own souls: no creature but man doth willingly kill itself. So I have done with the first, the sin forbidden in this commandment, *thou shalt not kill*.

EXOD. XX. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

II. **T**HE second duty implied is, that we should do *all the good we can to ourselves and others.*

1. In reference to others. We should endeavour to preserve the lives and souls of others.

2. In reference to ourselves. To preserve our own life and soul. [1.] In reference to others.

(1.) To preserve the life of others. Comfort them in their sorrows, relieve them in their wants; be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds, *Job xxix. 16. I was a father to the poor.*---13. *The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.* This is a great means of preserving the life of another, by relieving him when he is ready to perish. Pompey, when there was a great dearth in Rome, provided corn for their relief; and when the mariners were backward to sail thither in a tempest, saith he, *It is not necessary that we should live, but it is necessary that Rome be relieved.* Grace makes the heart tender, it causeth sympathy and charity: as it melts the heart in contrition towards God, so in compassion towards others, *Pf. cxii. 9. He hath dispersed, and given to the poor.* This the commandment implies, that we should be so far from ruining others, that we should do all we can to preserve the life of others. When we see the picture of death drawn in their faces, administer to their necessities: be temporal saviours to them; draw them out of the waters of affliction with a silver cord of charity. That I may persuade you to this, let me lay before you arguments;

*First,* Works of charity evidence grace.

1. *Faith*, James ii. 18. *I will shew thee my faith by my works.* Works are faith's letters of credence to show. We judge of the health of the body by the pulse, where the blood stirs and operates: Christian, judge of the health of thy faith by the pulse of charity: the word of God is the rule of faith, and good works are the witnesses of faith.

2. *Love.* Love loves mercy: it is a noble bountiful grace. Mary loved Christ, and how liberal was her love! she bestowed on Christ her tears, kisses, costly ointments. Love, like a full vessel, will have vent; it vents itself in acts of liberality.

*Secondly,* To communicate to the necessities

of others, is not arbitrary (it is not left to our choice whether we will or no) but it is a duty incumbent, *1 Tim. vi. 17. Charge them that are rich in this world that they do good.*---*that they be rich in good works.* This is not only a counsel, but a charge. If God should lay a charge upon the inanimate creatures, they would obey; if he should charge the rocks, they would send forth water; if he should charge the clouds, they would melt into showers; if he should charge the stones they would become bread--And shall we be harder than the stones not to obey God, when he chargeth us to *be rich in good works?*

*Thirdly,* God supplies our wants, and shall not we supply the wants of others? *We could not live without mercy.* God makes every creature helpful to us: the sun doth enrich us with its golden beams: the earth yields us its increase, veins of gold, crops of corn, store of flowers, God opens the treasury of his mercy, he feeds us every day out of the alms-basket of his providence: *thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing*, *Pf. cxlv. 6.* Now, doth God supply our wants, and shall not we minister to the wants of others? shall we be only as a sponge to suck in mercy, and not as breasts to milk it out to others?

*Fourthly,* Herein we resemble God, to be doing good to others. It is our excellency to be like God: *godliness is God-likeness.* And wherein are we more like him, than in acts of bounty and munificence? *Pf. cxix. 68. Thou art good, and doest good. Thou art good,* there is God's essential goodness; and *doest good,* there is his communicative goodness. The more helpful we are to others, the more like we are to God: we cannot be like God in omniscience, or in working miracles; but we may be like him in doing works of mercy.

*Fifthly,* God remembers all our deeds of charity, and takes them kindly at our hands, *Heb. vi. 10. God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love which you have shewed towards his name, in that you have ministered unto the saints.* The chief butler may forget Joseph's kindness, but the Lord will not forget any kindness we show to his people, *Mat. xxv. 35. I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and*  
ye



ye gave me drink. Christ takes the kindness done to his saints, as done to himself: God, that hath a bottle for your tears, hath a book to write down your alms, *Mal. iii. 16. A book of remembrance was written before him. Tamerlain* had a register to write down all the names and good services of his soldiers: so, God hath a book of remembrance to write down all your charitable works; and at the day of judgment there shall be an open and honourable mention made of them in presence of the angels.

*Sixthly*, Hard-heartedness to them in misery reproacheth the gospel. When mens hearts are like pieces of rocks, or as the scales of the Leviathan, shut up as with a close seal, *Job xli. 15.* You may as well extract oil out of a flint, as the golden oil of charity out of their hearts. *These unchristian themselves. Unmercifulness is the sin of the heathen, Rom. i. 13. Without mercy.* It eclipseth the glory of the gospel: doth the gospel teach uncharitableness? Doth it not bid us draw out our soul to the hungry? *Isa. i. 10. Tit. iii. 8. These things I will that you affirm, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.* While you relieve not such as are in want, you walk antipodes to the gospel; you cause it to be evil spoken of, and lay it open to the lash and censure of others.

*Seventhly*, There is nothing lost by relieving the necessitous. The *Shunamite* woman was kind to the prophet, she welcomed him to her house, and she received kindness from him another way; he restored her dead child to life, *2 Kings iv. 35.* Such as are helpful to others, shall find mercy to help in time of need. Such as pour out the golden oil of compassion to others, God will pour out the golden oil of salvation to them; for a cup of cold water they shall have rivers of pleasure. Nay, God will make it up some way or other in this life, *Prov. xi. 25. The liberal soul shall be made fat;* as the loaves in breaking multiplied, or, as the widow's oil increased in pouring out, *1 Kings xvii. 10.* An estate may be imparted, yet not impaired.

*Eighthly*, To do good to others in necessity, keeps up the credit of religion. Works of mercy adorn the gospel, as the fruit adorns the tree; when our light so shines that others see our good works, this glorifies God, crowns religion, silenceth the lips of gainsayers. *Basil* saith, nothing rendered the true religion more famous in the primitive times, and made more profe-

lytes to it, than the bounty and charity of the Christians.

*Ninthly and lastly*, The evil that doth accrue by not preserving the life of others, and helping them in their necessities. God sends oft a secret moth into their estate, *Prov. xi. 24. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Prov. xxi. 13. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. James ii. 13. He shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy.* *Dives* denied *Lazarus* a crumb of bread, and *Dives* was denied a drop of water, *Mat. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat.* Christ saith not, ye took away my meat; but ye gave me no meat; ye did not feed my members, therefore depart from me. By all this, be ready to distribute to the necessities of others. This is included in the commandment, *thou shalt not kill.* Not only, thou shalt not destroy this life, but thou shalt preserve it by giving to his necessities.

(2.) It is implied, that we should endeavour to preserve the souls of others: counsel them about their souls, set life and death before them, help them to heaven. In the law, if one met his neighbour's ox or ass going astray, he must bring him back again, *Exod. xxxiii. 4.* Much more, if we see our neighbour's soul going astray, we should use all means to bring him back to God by repentance.

[2.] In reference to ourselves. The commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*, requires that we should preserve our own life and soul: it is engraven upon every creature, that we should preserve our own natural life. We must be so far from self-murder, that we must do all we can to preserve our natural life: we must use all means of diet, exercise and lawful recreation, which is like oil to preserve the lamp of life from going out. Some have been under temptation; Satan has suggested they are such sinners as do not deserve a bit of bread, and so they have been ready to starve themselves: this is contrary to this sixth commandment, *thou shalt do no murder*; it is implied, we are to use all means for the preservation of our own life, *1 Tim. v. 23: Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake. Timothy* was not by drinking too much water to overcool his stomach, and weaken nature, but we must use means for self-preservation, *drink a little wine, &c.*

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, This commandment requires, that we should endeavour (as to preserve our own life, so especially) to preserve our own souls.

*Omnia si perdas animam servare memento.*

It is engraven upon every creature, as with the point of a diamond, that it should look to its own preservation. If the life of the body must be preserved, then much more the life of the soul. If he who doth not provide for his own house is worse than an infidel, *1 Tim. v. 8.* then much more he who doth not provide for his own soul. This is a main thing implied in the commandment, a special care for the preserving our souls: the soul is the jewel, the soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay; Christ puts the soul in balance with the world, and it outweighs, *Matth. xvi. 26.* The soul is a glass, in which some rays of divine glory shine; it hath in it some faint idea and resemblance of a Deity; it is a celestial spark lighted by the-breath of God. The body was made of the dust; but the soul is of a more noble extract and original, *Gen. ii. 7.* *God breathed into man a living soul.*

1. The soul is excellent in its nature. It is a spiritual being, it is a kind of angelical thing: the mind sparkles with knowledge, the will is crowned with liberty, and all the affections are as stars shining in their orb. The soul being spiritual, (1.) It is of quick operation. How quick are the motions of a spark! how swift is the wing of a cherubim! So quick and agile is the motion of the soul? what is quicker than a thought? How many miles can the soul travel in an instant! (2.) The soul, being spiritual, moves upward, it contemplates God and glory, *Pf. lxxiii. 25.* *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* The motion of the soul is upward; only sin hath put a wrong byass upon the soul, and made it move too much downward. (3.) The soul, being spiritual, hath a self-moving power; it can subsist and move when the body is dead, as the mariner can subsist when the ship is broken. (4.) The soul, being spiritual, is immortal, (Scaliger) *Aeternitatis gemma*, a bud of eternity.

2. As the soul is excellent in its nature, so in its capacities. It is capable of grace, it is fit to be an associate and companion of angels: It is capable of communion with God, of being Christ's spouse, *2 Cor. xi. 12.* *That I might espouse you virgin souls to Christ.* It is capable of being crowned with glory for ever. O then, carrying such precious souls about you, created with the breath of God, redeemed with the

blood of God; what endeavours should you use for the saving of these souls! let not the devil have your souls. *Heliogabalus* fed his lions with pheasant: the devil is called a roring lion, feed him not with your souls. Besides the excellency of the soul, which may make you labour to get it saved, consider how sad it will be not to have the soul saved. It is such a loss as there is none like it; because, in losing the soul, you lose a great many things with it. A merchant, in losing his ship, loseth many things with it; he loseth money, jewels, spices: so, he that loseth his soul, loseth Christ, the company of angels, heaven: it is an infinite loss, and it is an irreparable loss; it can never be made up again. Two eyes, but one soul, *Chrys.* O what care should be taken about the immortal soul! I would request but this of you, that you would but take as much care for the saving of your souls, as you do for the getting of an estate: nay, I will say this, do but take as much care for the saving your souls as the devil doth for destroying them. O how industrious is Satan to damn souls! how doth he play the serpent in his subtil laying of snares to catch souls! how doth he shoot fiery darts; the devil is never idle; the devil is a busy bishop in his own diocese, he walks up and down seeking whom he may devour, *1 Pet. v. 8.* Now, is not this a reasonable request, to take but as much care for the saving of your souls, as the devil doth for the destroying of them?

Qu. *How shall we do to get our souls saved?*

Ans. By having them sanctified. Only the pure in heart shall see God. Get your souls inlaid and enameled with holiness, *1 Pet. i. 16.* It is not enough that we cease to do evil, (which is all the evidence some have to show) this is to lose heaven by short shooting; but we must be inwardly sanctified: not only the unclean spirit must go out, but we must be filled with the Holy Ghost, *Eph. v. 18.* This holiness must needs be, if you consider God is to dwell with you here, and you are to dwell with him hereafter.

First, God is to dwell with you here. God takes up the soul for his own lodging, *Eph. iii. 17.* *That Christ may dwell in your heart.* Therefore the soul must be consecrated. A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor. vi. 19.* then the soul is the *sanctum sanctorum*: how holy ought that to be?



*Secondly*, You are to dwell with God. Heaven is an holy place, *1 Pet. i. 4. An inheritance undefiled.* And how can you dwell with God till you are sanctified? We do not put wine into a musty vessel: God will not put the new wine of glory into a sinful heart. O then, as

you love your souls, and would have them saved eternally, endeavour after holiness; by this means you will have an idoneity and fitness for the kingdom of heaven, and your souls will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.



## OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. xx. 14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

GOD is a pure, holy spirit, and hath an infinite antipathy against all uncleanness. In this commandment he hath entred his caution against it, *non maechaberis, Thou shalt not commit adultery.* The sum of this commandment is, *The preservation of corporal purity.* We must take heed of running on the rock of uncleanness, and so making ship-wreck of our chastity. In this commandment there is something tacitely implied, and something expressly forbidden.

1. Something tacitely implied, *viz.* That the ordinance of marriage should be observed.

2. Something expressly forbidden, *viz.* The infecting ourselves with bodily pollutions, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

(1.) Something implied, that *the ordinance of marriage should be observed*, *1 Cor. vii. 2. Let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband. Marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled*, *Heb. xxiii. 4.* God did institute marriage in paradise; he brought the woman to the man, *Gen. ii. 22.* He did as it were give them in marriage. And Jesus Christ did honour marriage with his presence, *John i. 2.* The first miracle he wrought was at a marriage, when he turned the *water into wine.* Marriage is a type and resemblance of the mystical union between Christ and his church, *Eph. v. 32.* Concerning marriage.

[1.] There are general duties. 1. The general duty of the husband is to rule, *Eph. v. 23. The husband is the head of the wife.* The head is the seat of rule and government; but he must rule with discretion. He is head, therefore must not rule without reason. 2. The general duty on the wife's part is submission, *Eph. iii. 22. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* It is observable, the Holy

Ghost passeth by Sarah's failings, he doth not mention her unbelief; but he takes notice of that which was good in her, her reverence and obedience to her husband, *1 Pet. iii. 6. Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.*

[2.] *Special duties* belonging to marriage, are *love and fidelity.* 1. *Love*, *Eph. v. 25. Love is the marriage of the affections.* There is, as it were, but one heart in two bodies: love lines the yoke, and makes it easy: love perfumes the marriage-relation: without which it is not *conjugium*, but *conjurgium*; it is like two poisons in one stomach, one is ever sick of the other. 2. *Fidelity.* In marriage, there is a mutual promise of living together faithfully according to God's holy ordinance. Among the *Romans*, on the day of marriage, the woman presented to her husband fire and water: fire refines metal, water cleanseth: hereby signifying, that she should live with her husband in chastity and sincerity. This is the first thing in the commandment implied, that the ordinance of marriage should be purely observed.

(2.) The thing forbidden in the commandment, *i. e.* infecting ourselves with bodily pollution and uncleanness. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* The fountain of this sin is lust. Since the fall, holy love is degenerated to lust. Lust is the fever of the soul. There is a two-fold adultery: 1. *Mental*, *Mat. v. 28. Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* As a man may die of an inward bleeding, so he may be damned for the inward boilings of lust, if they be not mortified. 2. *Corporal adultery*; when sin hath conceived, and brought forth in the act. This is expressly forbidden, under a *sub poena*, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* This commandment is set as an hedge

hedge to keep out uncleanness; and they that break this hedge, *a serpent shall bite them*. Job calls adultery an *heinous crime*, Job xxxi. 11. Every falling is not a crime, and every crime is not an *heinous crime*; but adultery is, *flagitium, an heinous crime*. The Lord calls it villainy, Jer. xxix. 33. *They have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours wives*.

Qn. Wherein appears the heinousness of this sin of adultery?

Ans. 1. In that adultery is the breach of the marriage-oath. When persons come together in a matrimonial way, they bind themselves by covenant each to other, in the presence of God; to be true and faithful in the conjugal relation. Unchastity is a falsifying this solemn oath; and herein adultery is worse than fornication, because 'tis a breach of the conjugal bond.

2. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, That it is such an high dishonour done to God, God saith, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. The adulterer sets his will above God's law, tramples upon God's command, affronts him to his face; as if a subject should tear his prince's proclamation. The adulterer is highly injurious to all the persons in the Trinity. (1.) To God the Father. Sinner, God hath given thee thy life, and thou dost waste the lamp of thy life, the flower of thy age in lewdness; he hath bestowed on thee many mercies, health and estate, and thou spendest all on harlots. Did God give thee wages to serve the devil? (2.) Injurious to God the Son, two ways. First, As he hath purchased thee with his blood, 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Ye are bought with a price*. Now, he who is bought, is not his own; it is a sin for him to go to another, without consent from Christ, who hath bought him with a price. Secondly, By virtue of baptism thou art a Christian, and professest that Christ is thy head, and thou art a member of Christ; therefore, what an injury is it to Christ, to take the members of Christ, and make them the *Members of an harlot*, 1 Cor. vi. 15. (3.) It is injurious to God the Holy Ghost; for the body is *his temple*, 1 Cor. vi. 19. *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?* And what a sin is it to defile his temple!

3. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, That it is committed with mature deliberation. First, there is the contriving the sin in the mind, then consent in the will, and then the sin is put forth into act. To sin against the light of

nature, and to sin deliberately, is like the dye to the wool, it gives sin a tincture, and dyes it of a crimson colour.

4. That which makes adultery so heinous, is, That it is a sin after remedy. God hath provided a remedy to prevent this sin, 1 Cor. vii. 2. *To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife*. Therefore after this remedy prescribed, to be guilty of fornication or adultery, is inexcusable; it is like a rich thief, that steals when he hath no need. This doth enhance and accent the sin, and make it heinous.

Use I. It condemns the church of Rome, who allow the sin of fornication and adultery. They suffer not their priests to marry, but they may have their whores; the worst kind of uncleanness. Incest with the nearest of kin, is dispensed with for money. It was once said of Rome, *Urbis est jam tota lupanar, --- Rome was become a common stew*. And no wonder, when the pope could for a sum of money, give them a license and patent to commit uncleanness; and, if the patent were not enough, he would give them a pardon. Many of the papists judge fornication venial. God condemns the very lusting, Matth. v. 28. If God condemns the thought, how dare they allow the fact of fornication? You see what a cage of unclean birds the church of Rome is: they call themselves the *Holy Catholic Church*; but, how can they be holy, who are so steeped and parboiled in fornication, incest, sodomy, and all manner of uncleanness?

Use II. It is matter of lamentation, to see this commandment so slighted and violated among us. Adultery is the reigning sin of the times, Hos. vii. 4. *They are adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker*. The time of Henry VIII. was called the *golden age*, but this may be called the *unclean age*, wherein whore-hunting is common, Ezek. xxiv. 13. *In your filthiness is lewdness*. Luther tells of one who said, *If he might but satisfy his lust, and be carried from one whore-house to another, he would desire no other heaven; afterwards he breathed out his soul betwixt two notorious strumpets*. This is to be the right seed of Adam, to love the forbidden fruit, to love to drink of stolen waters, Ezek. viii. 8, 9. *Son of man, dig in the wall; and when I had digged, behold a door; and he said, Go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here*. Could we, as the prophet, dig in the walls of many houses, what vile abominations should we see there! In some



chambers we might see fornication; dig further, and see adultery; dig further, and we may see incest, &c. And may not the Lord go from his sanctuary? as, *Ezek. viii. 6. Seest thou the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?* God might remove his gospel, and then we might write *Ichabod* on this nation, *The glory is departed.* Let us mourn for what we cannot reform.

*Use III.* It exhorts us to keep ourselves from this sin of adultery. *Let every man have his own wife,* saith *Paul*, *1 Cor. vii. 2.* not his concubine, nor his curtezan. Now, that I may deter you from adultery, let me show you the great evil of it.

*First,* It is a *thievish sin.* Adultery is the highest sort of theft: the adulterer steals from his neighbour that which is more than his goods and estate; he steals away his wife from him, *who is flesh of his flesh.*

*Secondly,* Adultery debaseth a person, it makes him resemble the beasts; therefore the adulterer is described like an *Horse neighing*, *Jer. v. 8. Every one neigheth after his neighbour's wife.* Nay, this is worse than brutish; for some creatures, that are void of reason, yet, by the instinct of nature, observe a kind of *decorum*, or chastity. The turtle-dove is a chaste creature, and keeps to its mate: the stork, wherever he flies, comes into no nest but his own. Naturalists write, if a stork, leaving his own mate, joineth with any other, all the rest of the storks fall upon him, and pull his feathers from him. Adultery is worse than brutish, it degrades a person of his honour.

*Thirdly,* Adultery doth pollute and be-filthy a person. The devil is called an *unclean spirit*; *Luke xi. 24.* The adulterer is the devil's first-born; he is unclean; he is a moving quagmire; he is all over ulcerated with sin: his eyes sparkle with lust; his mouth comes out filth; his heart burns like mount *Aetna*, in unclean desires: he is so filthy, that if he die in this sin, all the flames of hell will never purge away his uncleanness. And, as for the adulteress, who can paint her black enough? The scripture calls her a *deep ditch*, *Prov. xxiii. 27.* She is a *common shore*: whereas, a believer, his body is a living temple, and his soul a little heaven, bespangled with the graces, as so many little stars. The body of an harlot is a walking dunghil, and her soul a lesser hell.

*Fourthly,* Adultery is destructive to the body,

*Prov. v. 11. And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body is consumed.* It brings into a consumption. Uncleanness turns the body into an hospital; it wastes the radical moisture, rots the skull, eats the beauty of the face. As the flame wastes the candle, so the fire of lust consumes the bones. The adulterer hastens his own death, *Prov. vii. 23. Till a dart strike through his liver.* The *Romans* had their funerals at the gate of *Venus's* temple, to signify that lust brings death. *Venus* is lust.

*Fifthly,* Adultery is a purgatory to the purse: as it wastes the body, so the estate, *Prov. vi. 26. By the means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread.* Whores are the devil's horse-leeches, sponges that will soon suck in all one's money. The prodigal had soon spent his portion, when once he fell among harlots, *Luke xv. 30.* King *Edward III.* his concubine, when he lay a-dying, got all she could from him, and plucked the rings off his fingers, and so left him. He that lives in luxury, dies in beggary.

*Sixthly,* Adultery blots and eclipseth the name, *Prov. vi. 33. Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* Some while they get wounds, get honour. The soldier's wounds are full of honour: the martyr's wounds for Christ are full of honour: these get honour while they get wounds: but the adulterer gets wounds in his name, but no honour. *His reproach shall not be wiped away.* The wounds of the name no physician can heal. The adulterer, when he is dead, his shame lives. When his body rots under ground, his name rots above ground. His base-born children will be the living monuments of his shame.

*Seventhly,* This sin doth much eclipse the light of reason; it steals away the understanding; it stupifies the heart, *Hos. iv. 11. Whoredom takes away the heart.* It eats out all heart for good. *Solomon* besotted himself with women, and they enticed him to idolatry.

*Eighthly,* This sin of adultery ushers in temporal judgments. The Mosaic law made adultery death, *Lev. xx. 10. The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death:* and the usual death was stoning, *Deut. xxii. 24.* The *Saxons* commanded the persons taken in this sin to be burnt. The *Romans* caused their heads to be stricken off. This sin, like a scorpion, carries a sting in the tail of it. The adultery

dultery of *Paris* and *Helena*, a beautiful strumpet, ended in the ruin of *Troy*, and was the death both of *Paris* and *Helena*. *Jealousy* is the rage of a man: and the adulterer is oft killed in the act of his sin. Adultery cost *Otho* the emperor, and pope *Sixtus IV.* their lives.

*Læta venire Venus triftis abire folet.*

I have read of two citizens in *London*, 1583. who, defiling themselves with adultery on the Lord's day, were immediately struck dead with a fire from heaven. If all that were now guilty of this sin should be punished in this manner, it would rain fire again, as on *Sodom*.

*Ninthly*, Adultery (without repentance) damns the soul, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9. 'Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate; shall enter into the kingdom of God.' The fire of lust brings to the fire of hell, *Heb.* xiii. 4. *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Tho' men may neglect to judge them, yet God will judge them.---But, will not God judge all other sinners? Yes. Why then doth the apostle say, *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge?* The meaning is, (1.) He will judge them assuredly; they shall not escape the hand of justice. (2.) He will punish them severely, 2 *Pet.* ii. 10. 'The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk in the lust of uncleanness.' The harlot's breast keeps from *Abraham's* bosom, *Momentaneum est quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat.* Who would, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath? *Prov.* ix. 18. *Her guests are in the depths of hell.* A wife traveller, when he comes to his inn, tho' many pleasant dishes are set before him, yet he forbears to taste, because of the reckoning which will be brought in: we are here all travellers to *Jerusalem* above; and tho' many baits of temptation are set before us, yet we should forbear, and think of the reckoning which will be brought in at death. With what stomach could *Dionysius* eat his dainties, when he imagined there was a naked sword hung over his head as he sat at meat? While the adulterer feeds on strange flesh, the sword of God's justice hangs over his head. *Causinus* speaks of a tree that grows in *Spain* that is of a sweet smell, and pleasant to the taste, but the juice of it is poisonous: the emblem of an harlot; she is perfumed with powders, and fair to look on, but poisonous and damnable to the soul, *Prov.* vii. 26. *She hath cast down many wounded; yea,*

*many strong men have been slain by her.*

*Tenthly*, The adulterer doth not only wrong his own soul, but doth what in him lies to destroy the soul of another, and so kill two at once. And thus the adulterer is worse than the thief: for, suppose a thief rob a man, yea, take away his life, yet that man's soul may be happy; he may go to heaven as well as if he had died in his bed. But he who commits adultery endangers the soul of another, and deprives her of salvation so far as in him lies. Now, what a fearful thing is it to be an instrument to draw another to hell!

*Eleventhly*, The adulterer is abhorred of God, *Prov.* xxii. 14. 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he who is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.' What can be worse than to be abhorred of God? God may be angry with his own children; but for God to abhor a man; is the highest degree of hatred.

*Qu.* But how doth the Lord show his abhorring of the adulterer?

*Ans.* In giving him up to a reprobate mind and a seared conscience, *Rom.* i. 26. And now he is in such a condition that he cannot repent. This is to be abhorred of God; such a person stands upon the threshold of hell; and when death gives him a jog, he tumbles in. All which may sound a retreat in our ears, and call us off from the pursuit of so damnable a sin as uncleanness. I will conclude with two scriptures, *Prov.* v. 8. 'Come not nigh the door of her house.' *Prov.* vii. 27. 'Her house is the way to hell.'

*Twelfthly*, Adultery is a sower of discord: it destroys peace and love, the two best flowers which grow in a family. Adultery sets husband against wife, and wife against husband; and so it causeth the 'joints of the same body to smite one against another.' And this division in a family works confusion: for, 'An house divided against itself cannot stand,' *Luke* xi. 17. *Omne divisibile est corruptibile.*

*Qu.* How may we abstain from this sin of adultery?

*Ans.* I shall lay down some directions, by way of antidote, to keep you from being infected with this sin. (1) Come not into the company of a whorish woman; avoid her house, as a seaman doth a rock, *Prov.* v. 8. *Come not near the door of her house.* He who would not have the plague, must not come near houses infected; every whore-house hath the plague in it.



jt. Not to beware of the occasion of sin, and yet pray, *I lead us not into temptation*, is, as if one should put his finger in the candle, and yet pray that it may not be burnt. (2.) Look to your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye, 2 Pet. ii. 14. *Having eyes full of adultery*. The eye tempts the fancy, and the fancy works upon the heart. A wanton amorous eye may usher in sin. *Eve first saw the tree of knowledge*, and then *she took*, Gen. iii. 6. First she looked, and then she loved. The eye oft sets the heart on fire; therefore *Job* laid a law upon his eyes, *Job xxxi. 1. I made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?* *Democritus* the philosopher plucked out his eyes, because he would not be tempted with vain objects: the scripture doth not bid us do so, but set a watch before our eyes. (3.) Look to your lips. Take heed of any unseemly word that may enkindle unclean thoughts in yourselves or others, 1 Cor. xv. 33. *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. Impure discourse is the bellows to blow up the fire of lust. Much evil is conveyed to the heart by the tongue, *Pf. cxli. 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth*. (4.) Look in a special manner to your heart, *Prov. iv. 23. Keep thy heart with all keeping*. Every one hath a tempter in his own bosom, *Matth. xv. 19. Out of the heart come evil thoughts*. And thinking of sin makes way for the act of sin. Suppress the first risings of sin in your heart. As the serpent, when danger is near, keeps his head; so keep your heart, which is the spring from whence all lustful motions do proceed. (5.) Look to your attire. We read of the *Attire of an harlot*, *Prov. vii. 10*: A wanton dress is a provocation to lust. Curlings and towerings of the hair, a painted face, naked breasts, are allurements to vanity. Where the bush is hung out, people will go in and taste of the liquor. *Hierom* saith, such as by their lascivious attire endeavour to draw others to lust, tho' no evil follow, yet these tempters shall be punished, because they offered poison to others, tho' they would not drink. (6.) Take heed of evil company. *Serpunt vitia & in proximum quemque transiliunt*, *Sen.* Sin is a disease very catching: one man tempts another to sin, and hardens him in sin. There are three cords to draw men to *adultery*; the inclination of the heart, the persuasions of evil company, and the embraces of the harlot; and this threefold cord is not easily broken, *Pf. cvi. 18. A fire was kindled in their company*. I may allude to it,

the fire of lust is kindled in bad company. (7.) Beware of going to plays. A play-house is oft a preface to a whore-house, *Ludi præbent semina nequitie*. We are bid to avoid all appearance of evil: are not plays the appearance of evil? Such sights are there, as are not fit to be beheld with chaste eyes. Both fathers and councils have shown their dislike of going to plays. A learned divine observes, *That many have on their death-beds, confessed with tears, that the pollution of their bodies hath been occasioned by going to plays*. (8.) Take heed of mixed dancing: *Instrumenta luxuriæ tripudia*. From dancing people come to dalliance one with another, and from dalliance to uncleanness. There is, saith *Calvin*, for the most part, some unchast behaviour in dancing. Dances draw the heart to folly by wanton gestures, by unchast touches, by lustful looks. *Sr. Chrysostom* did inveigh against mixed dancing in his time. We read (saith he) of a marriage-feast, and of virgins going before with lamps, *Matth. xxv. 7. but of dancing there we read not*. Many have been ensnared by dancing; as the duke of Normandy, and others. *Saltatio ad adulteras non pudicas pertinet*, *Amb.* *Chrysostom* saith, where dancing is, there the devil is: I speak chiefly of mixed dancing. And, whereas we read of dances in scripture, *Exod. xv.* those were sober and modest. They were not mixed dances, but pious and religious, being usually accompanied with singing praises to God. (9.) Take heed of lascivious books, and those pictures that provoke to lust; 1. *Books*. As the reading of the scripture doth stir up love to God, so reading of bad books doth stir up the mind to wickedness. I could name one who published a book to the world full of effeminate, amorous and wanton expressions; before he died, he was much troubled for it, and did burn that book, which did make so many burn in lust. 2. And to lascivious books, I may add lascivious pictures, which bewitch the eye, and are the incendiaries of lust. They secretly convey poison to the heart. *Qui aspicit innocens sit aspectu nocens*. Popish pictures are not more prone to stir up to idolatry, than unclean pictures are to stir up to concupiscence. (10.) Take heed of excess in diet. When gluttony and drunkenness lead the van, chambering and wantonness bring up the rear. *Vinum fomentum libidinis*; any wine inflames lust; and *subnest of bread* is made the cause of Sodom's uncleanness, *Ezek. xvi. 49*. The rankest weeds grow out

out of the fattest soil: uncleanness proceeds from excess, *Jer. v. 8. When they were fed to the full, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Get the golden bridle of temperance.* God allows recruits of nature, and what may fit us the better for his service; but beware of surfeit. Excess in the creature clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust. *St. Paul did keep under his body, 1 Cor. ix. 27. The flesh pampered is apt to rebel. Corpus impigatum recalcitrat. (11.)* Take heed of idleness. When a man is out of a calling, now he is fit to receive any temptation. We do not use to sow seed in fallow-ground: but the devil sows most seed of temptation in such as ly fallow. Idleness is the cause of sodomy and uncleanness, *Ezek. xvi. 49. When David was idle on the top of his leads, then he espied Bathsheba, and took her to him, 2 Sam. xi. 4. Hierom gave his friend this counsel, to be always well employed in God's vineyard; that, when the devil came, he might have no leisure to listen to a temptation. (12.)* To avoid fornication and adultery, let every man have a chaste, entire love to his own wife. *Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes, chap. xxiv. 16. When Solomon had disuaded from strange women, he prescribes a remedy against it, Prov. v. 18. Rejoyce with the wife of thy youth. It is not the having a wife, but the loving a wife, makes a man live chastly. He who loves his wife, whom Solomon calls his fountain, will not go abroad to drink of muddy, poisoned waters. Pure conjugal love is a gift of God, and comes from heaven; this, like the Vestal fire, must be cherished, that it doth not go out. He who loves not his wife, is the likeliest person to embrace the bosom of a stranger. (13.)* Labour to get the fear of God into your hearts, *Prov. xvi. 6. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. As the banks keep out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out uncleanness. Such as want the fear of God, want the bridle that should check them from sin. How did Joseph keep from his mistress's temptation? The fear of God pulled him back, Gen. xxxix. 9. How should I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? St. Bernard calls holy fear, janitor animæ, the door-keeper of the soul. As a nobleman's porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering. (14.)* Get a delight in the word of God, *Pf. cxix. 123. How sweet is thy word to*

*my taste! St. Chrysostom compares God's word to a garden. If we walk in this garden, and sack sweetness from the flowers of the promises, we shall never care to pluck the forbidden fruit. Sint castæ deliciæ meæ scripturæ, Aug. The reason why persons seek after unchast, sinful pleasures, is, because they have no better. Cæsar riding through a city, and seeing the women play with dogs and parrots, said, Sure they have no children. So, they that sport with harlots, it is because they have no better pleasures. He that hath once tasted Christ in a promise, is ravished with delight; and how would he scorn a motion to sin! Job said, the word was his appointed food, Job xliii. 12. No wonder then he made a covenant with his eyes. (15.)* If you would abstain from adultery, use serious consideration. Consider,

1. *God sees thee in the act of sin.* He sees all thy curtain-wickedness. He is *totus oculus, all eye, Aug.* The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to hide thee from God's eye. Thou canst not sin, but thy Judge looks on, *Jer. xv. 27. I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings. Jer. xxix. 33. They have committed adultery with their neighbours wives; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.*

2. Few that are intangled in the sin of adultery recover out of the snare, *Prov. ii. 19. None that go to her return again.* That made some of the antients conclude, that adultery was an unpardonable sin: but not so; *David repented, and Mary Magdalene was a weeping penitent: her amorous eyes that had sparkled with lust, she seeks to be revenged of them, she washed Christ's feet with her tears: so that some have recovered out of the same snare. But, none that go to her return, that is, very few; it is rare to hear of any who are enchanted and bewitched with this sin of adultery, that recover out of it, Eccles. vii. 26. Her heart is snares and nets; and her hands as bands. Her heart is snares, that is, she is subtil to deceive those who come to her; and, her hands are bands, that is, her embraces are powerful to hold and intangle her lovers. Plutarch said of the Persian kings, They were captives to their concubines: they were so inflamed, that they had no power to leave their company. This consideration may make all fearful of this sin: none that go to her return again. Soft pleasures harden the heart.*

3. Consider what the scripture saith, and it may



may *ponere obicem*, lay a bar in the way to this sin, *Mal. iii. 5. I will be a swift witness against adulterers.* It is good when God is a witness for us, when he witnesseth for our sincerity, as he did for *Job*: but it is sad to have God a witness against us. *I* (saith God) *will be a witness against the adulterer.* And who shall disprove his witness? And he is both witness and judge, *Heb. xiii. 4. Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

4. Consider the *sad farewell* this sin of adultery leaves; it leaves an hell in the conscience, *Prov. xv. 4. The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, her end is bitter as worm-wood.* The goddess *Diana* was so artificially drawn, that she seemed to smile upon those that came into her temple, but frown on those that went out. So the harlot smiles on her lovers as they come to her, but at last comes the frown and sting, *A dart strikes through their liver, Prov. vii. 23. Her end is bitter.* When a man hath been virtuous, the labour is gone, but the comfort remains: but when he hath been vicious and unclean, the pleasure is gone, but the sting remains. *Delectat in momentum, cruciat in æternum, Jerom.* When the senses have been feasted with unchast pleasures, the soul is left to pay the reckoning. Stollen waters are sweet; but, as poison, tho' it be sweet in the mouth, it torments the bowels. Sin always ends in a tragedy. Memorable is that which *Fincelius* reports of a priest in *Flanders*, who enticed a maid to uncleanness. She objected how vile a sin it was; he told her, By authority from the pope he could commit any sin; so at last he drew her to his wicked purpose. But when they had been together a while, in came the devil, and took away the harlot from the priest's side, and, notwithstanding all her crying out, carried her away. If all that are guilty of bodily uncleanness in this nation, should have the devil come and carry them away, I fear more would be carried away than would be left behind.

(16.) Pray against this sin. *Luther* gave a lady this advice, that when any lust began to rise in her heart, she should go to prayer. Prayer is the best armour of proof: prayer quencheth the wild fire of lust. If prayer will cast out the devil; why may it not cast out those lusts that come from the devil?

*Use ult.* If the body must be kept pure from defilement, much more the soul of a Christian

must be kept pure. This is the meaning of the commandment, not only that we should not stain our bodies with adultery, but that we should keep our souls pure. To have a chaste body, but an unclean soul, is like a fair face with bad lungs; or a gilt chimney-piece, that is all foot within, *1 Pet. i. 16. Be ye holy, for I am holy.* The soul cannot be lovely to God, till it hath Christ's image stamped upon it, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness, *Eph. iv. 14.* The soul must especially be kept pure, because it is the chief place of God's residence, *Eph. iii. 17.* A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. If the body of the temple, the soul, is the *holy of holies*, this must be consecrated. We must not only keep our bodies from carnal pollution, but our souls from envy and malice.

*Qu. How shall we know our souls are pure?*

*Ans. 1.* If our souls are pure, then we flee from the appearance of evil, *1 Thess. v. 22.* We will not do that which looks like sin. When *Joseph's* mistress did court and tempt him, he left his garment in her hand, and fled, *Gen. xxxix. 12.* It was suspicious to be near her. *Poly carp* would not be seen in company with *Marceon* the heretic, because it would not be of good report.

2. If our souls are pure, this light of purity will shine forth. *Aaron* had *Holiness* to the Lord written upon his golden plate: where there is sanctity in the soul, there *Holiness* to the Lord is engraven upon our life; we are adorned with patience, humility, good works, and shine as *Lights in the world*, *Phil. ii. 15.* carry Christ's picture in our conversations, *1 John ii. 6.* O let us labour for this soul-purity! without it there is *no seeing of God*, *Heb. xii. 14.* *What communion hath light with darkness?* And that we may keep our souls pure, (1.) Have recourse to the blood of Christ: this is the fountain set open for *Sin and uncleanness*, *Zech. xiii. 1.* A soul steeped in the brinish tears of repentance, and bathed in the blood of Christ, is made pure. (2.) Pray much for pureness of soul, *Pf. li. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God.* Some pray for children, others for riches; but pray for soul-purity. Say, *Lord, tho' my body is kept pure, yet, Lord, my soul is defiled, I pollute all I touch. O purge me with hyssop, let Christ's blood sprinkle me, let the Holy Ghost come upon me and anoint me.*

me. *O make me evangelically pure, that I may be translated to heaven, and placed among the cherubims, where I shall be as holy as thou*

*wouldst have me to be, and as happy as I can desire to be.*

## OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 15. *Thou shalt not steal.*

AS the holiness of God sets him against uncleanness, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*; so the justice of God sets him against rapine and robbery, *Thou shalt not steal*. The thing forbidden in this commandment, is, meddling with another man's property, *Thou shalt not steal*. The civil lawyers define, *furtum, stealth* or *theft*, to be *the laying hands unjustly on that which is another's*: the invading another's right.

Qu. *Whence doth theft arise?*

Ans. 1. The internal causes are, (1.) *Unbelief*. A man hath an high distrust of God's providence: *Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?* Ps. lxxviii. 19. So saith the unbeliever, *Can God spread a table for me?* No, he cannot. Therefore he is resolved he will spread a table for himself, but it shall be of other men's cost, and both first and second course shall be served in with stolen goods. (2.) *Covetousness*. The Greek word for *covetousness* signifies an immoderate desire of getting: this is the root of theft. A man covets more than his own, and this itch of covetousness makes him scratch what he can from another. Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold, which wedge did cleave asunder his soul from God, *Joshua vii. 21.*

2. The external cause of theft, is, *Satan's solicitation*: Judas was a thief, John xii. 6. How came he to be a thief? *Satan entred into him*, John xiii. 27. The devil is the great master-thief, he robbed us of our coat of innocence, and he persuades men to take up his trade: he tells men how bravely they shall live by thieving, and how they may catch an estate. And as *Eve* listened to the serpent's voice, so do they; and, as birds of prey, live upon spoil and rapine.

Qu. 2. *How many sorts of thefts are there?*

Ans. I. There is a stealing from God; and so they are thieves who rob any part of God's

day from him.----Remember to keep holy the sabbath-day.----Not a part of the day only, but the whole day must be dedicated to God. And, lest any should forget this, the Lord hath prefixed a *memento, remember*. Therefore to cut God short, and after morning-sacrifice, to spend the other part of the sabbath in vanity and pleasure; this is *spiritual thievery*, 'tis to rob God of his due: and the very heathens will rise up in judgment against such Christians; for the heathens (as *Macrobius* notes) did observe a whole day to their false gods.

II. There is a stealing from others, 1<sup>st</sup>. A stealing away their souls; and so heretics are thieves: by robbing men of the truth, they rob them of their souls. 2<sup>dly</sup>. A stealing away their money and goods from them: and under this head of stealing away others money, there may be several arraigned for thieves.

(1.) The *high-way thief*, who takes a purse, contrary to the letter of this commandment, *Lev. xix. 13. Thou shalt not rob thy neighbour*. Mark x. 19. *Do not steal*. This is not the violence which takes the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xi. 12.

(2.) The *house-thief*, who purloins and filcheth out of his master's cash, or steals his wares and drugs. The apostle saith, *Some have entertained angels into their houses unawares*, Heb. xiii. 2. But many masters have entertained thieves into their houses unawares. The house-thief is an hypocrite, as well as a thief; he hath demure looks, and pretends he is helping his master, when he only helps to rob him.

(3.) The thief that shrowds himself under law, as the unjust attorney or lawyer, who prevaricates and deals falsely with his client. This is to steal from the client. By deceit and prevarication the lawyer robs the client of his land, and may be the means to ruin his family; he is no better than a thief in God's account.

(4.) The church-thief or pluralist, who holds



several benefices, but seldom or never preacheth to the people: he gets the golden fleece, but lets his flock starve, *Ezek. xxxiv. 2. Wo be to the shepherds of Israel: v. 8. They feed themselves, and feed not my flock.* These ministers will be indicted for thieves at God's bar.

(5.) The *shop-thief*, he steals in selling, (1.) Who useth false weights and measures, and so steals from others what is their due. *Amos v. 8. Who makes the ephah small.* The ephah was a measure the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, gave scant measure, which was plain stealing, *Hos. xii. 7. The balances of deceit are in his hand.* Men, by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier.

(2.) He steals in selling, who puts excessive prices on his commodities. He takes thrice as much for a commodity as it cost him, or as it is worth: to over-reach others in selling, is to steal mens money from them, *Lev. xix. 13. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him.* To defraud him is to rob him; this over-reaching others in selling (which is a cunning way of stealing) is both against law and gospel. 1. It is against the law of God, *Lev. xxv. 14. If thou sell ought to thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.* And, 2. Against gospel, 1 *Theff. iv. 6. Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother.* It is stealing.

(6.) The *Usurer*, who takes of others even to extortion: he seems to help another by letting him have money in his necessity, but gets him into bonds, and sucks out his very blood and marrow. I read of a woman whom *Satan* had bound, *Luke xiii. 16.* And truly, he is almost in as bad a condition whom the usurer hath bound: the oppressing usurer is a robber. An usurer once asked a prodigal, when he would leave spending? Saith the prodigal, then I will leave spending what is my own, when thou leavest off stealing from others. *Zaccheus* was an extortioner, and after his conversion he made restitution, *Luke xix. 8.* He thought all he got by extortion was theft.

(7.) The *scoffe* in trust, who hath the orphan's estate committed to him: he is deputed to be his guardian, and manage his estate for him; and he curtails the estate, and gets a fleece out of it for himself, and wrongs the orphan. This is a thief; this is worse than taking a purse, because he betrays his trust, which is the highest piece of treachery and injustice,

(8.) The *borrower*, who borrows money from others with an intention never to pay them again, *Pf. lvii. 21. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.* What is it but thievery, to take money and goods from others, and not restore them again? The prophet *Elisba* bad the widow sell her oil, and pay her debts, and then live upon the rest, 2 *Kings iv. 7.*

(9.) The last sort of thief, is, the *receiver of stolen goods.* The receiver, if he be not the principal, yet he is accessory to the theft, and the law makes him guilty. The thief steals the money, and the receiver holds the sack to put it in. The root would die if it were not watered; and thievery would cease if it were not encouraged by the receiver. I am apt to think, he who doth not scruple to take stolen goods into his house, would as little scruple to take a purse.

Qu. What are the aggravations of this sin of stealing?

Ans. 1. To steal when one has no need. To be a rich thief.

2. To steal sacrilegiously. To devour things set apart to holy uses, *Prov. xx. 25. It is a snare to the man which devoureth that which is holy.* Such an one was *Dionysius*, who robbed the temple, and took away the silver vessels.

3. To commit the sin of theft against checks of conscience, and examples of God's justice; this is like the dye to the wool, it doth dye the sin of a crimson colour.

4. To rob the widow and orphan, *Exod. xxii. 22. Ye shall not afflict the widow or fatherless: peccatum clamans; If they cry unto me, I will surely hear them.*

5. To rob the poor: how did *David* disdain that the rich man should take away the poor man's lamb! *As the Lord lives, he shall surely die,* 2 *Sam. xii. 5.* What is the inclosing of commons, but robbing of the poor?

III. There is a stealing from a man's self. A man may be a thief to himself.

Qu. How so?

Ans. 1. By *niggardlinefs.* The niggard is a thief; he steals from himself, in that he doth not allow himself what is fitting. He thinks that lost which is bestowed upon himself: he robs himself of necessaries. *Eccl. vi. 2. A man to whom God hath given riches, yet God gives him not power to eat thereof.* He gluts his chest, and starves his belly: he is like the ass that

that is loaded with gold, but feeds upon thistles: he robs himself of that which God allows him. This is indeed to be punished with riches: to have an estate, and want an heart to take the comfort of it, this man is a thief to himself.

2. A man may be a thief to himself, and rob himself by prodigality, *viz.* wasting his estate. The prodigal lavisheth gold out of his bag; he is like *Crates*, the philosopher, who threw his gold into the sea. The prodigal boils a great estate to nothing: this is to be a thief to a man's self, to spend away that estate from himself, which might conduce to the comfort of life.

3. He is a thief to himself, by *idleness*, when he mispends his *time*. To spend one's hours in pleasure and vanity, this is to rob himself of that precious *time* which God hath given him to work out salvation. *Time* is a rich commodity, because on the well-spending this present *time*, an happy eternity depends. He that spends his time idly, and vainly, is a thief to himself; he robs himself of his golden seasons, and, by consequence, of salvation.

4. A man may be a thief to himself, by *suretyship*, Prov. xxii. 26. *Be not thou one of them that are sureties for debt.* The creditor comes upon the surety for debt, and so by paying another's debt he is a thief to himself, he undoes himself. Let not any man say, he should have been counted unkind, if he had not entred into bonds for his friend: better thy friend count thee unkind, than all men count thee unwise. Lend another what you can spare; nay, give him if he needs, but never be a surety: it is no wisdom for a man so to help another, as to undo himself. This is to rob himself and his family.

*Use I.* It confutes the doctrine of *community*, that all things are *common*, and one man hath a right to another's estate. The scripture confutes it, Deut. xxiii. 25. *When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour's, thou shalt not move a sickle into thy neighbour's corn.* Propriety must be observed: God hath set this eighth commandment as a hedge about a man's estate, and this hedge cannot be broken without sin. If all things be common, then there is no stealth, and so this commandment were in vain.

*Use II.* It reproves such as live upon stealing. Instead of *living by faith*, they live by their shifts. The apostle exhorteth, that *every man eat his own bread*, 2 Thess. iii. 12. The thief doth not eat of his own bread, but of another's. If there be any who are guilty of this sin, let them

labour to recover out of the share of the devil by repentance, and let them show their repentance by restitution. *Non remittitur peccatum nisi restitatur ablatum*, Aug. *Without restitution, no remission.* Luke xix. 8. *If I have taken away any thing from any man unjustly, I restore him four-fold.* It may suffice to restore ill-gotten goods by one's own hand, or by proxy. Better a thousand times restore goods unlawfully gotten, than to stuff one's pillow with thorns, and have guilt trouble one's conscience upon a death-bed.

*Use III. Exhort.* To all to take heed of this sin of thieving; it is a sin against the light of nature. Some may go to excuse this sin: hear the thief's plea; it is a coarse wool will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse. *I am (saith one) grown low in the world, and trading is bad, and I have no other way to a livelihood.*

*Ans.* 1. This shows a great distrust of God, as if he could not provide for thee without thy sin. 2. This shows sin is gotten to a great height, that, because a man is grown low in the world, therefore he will *Acheronta movere*, go to the devil for a livelihood. *Abraham* would not have it said, that *the king of Sodom had made him rich*, Gen. xiv. 22. O let it never be said, that the devil hath made thee rich! 3. Thou oughtest not to undertake any action which thou canst not pray for a blessing upon: but, if thou livest on thieving, thou canst not pray for a blessing upon stolen goods; therefore take heed of this sin, *lucrum in arca, damnum in conscientia*, Aug. Take heed of getting the world with the loss of heaven. To dissuade all from this horrid sin, consider,

(1.) *Thieves* are the caterpillars of the earth, enemies to civil society.

(1.) God hates them. In the law, the *Cor-morant* was unclean, Lev. xi. 17. because a thievish, devouring creature, a bird of prey; by which God shewed his hatred of this sin.

(3.) The *thief is a terror to himself*, he is always in fear, Ps. liii. 5. *There were they in great fear*; true of the thief. Guilt breeds fear: if he hear but the shaking of a tree, his heart shakes. It is said of *Cataline*, he was afraid of every noise. If a briar doth but take hold of a thief's garment, he is afraid it is the officer to apprehend him; and fear hath torment in it, 1 John iv. 18.

(4.) The judgments that follow this sin, *Achan the thief was stoned to death*, Josh. vii.



and *Zech. v. 2. What seeſt thou? And I ſaid, a flying roll, ver. iii. This is the curſe that goes over the face of the earth; I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief. Fabius, a Roman cenſor, condemned his own ſon to die for theft. Thieves die with ignominy, the ladder is their preferment: and there is a worſe thing than death, while they rob others of money, they rob themſelves of ſalvation.*

*Qu. What is to be done to avoid ſtealing?*

*Anſ. 1. Live in a calling, Eph. iv. 28. Let him that ſtole ſteal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands, &c. Such as*

ſtand idle, the devil hires them, and puts them to the pilfering trade. An idle perſon tempts the devil to tempt him.

2. Be content with the eſtate God hath given you, *Heb. xiii. 5. Be content with ſuch things as ye have.* Theft is the daughter of avarice; ſtudy contentment. Believe that condition beſt, God hath carved out to you. God can bleſs that little meal in the barrel. We ſhall not need theſe things long, we ſhall carry nothing out of the world with us but our winding ſheet. If we have but enough to bear out our charges to heaven, it is ſufficient.



## OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

*Exod. xx. 16. Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.*

**T**HE tongue, which at firſt was made to be an organ of God's praiſe, is now become an instrument of unrighteouſneſs. This commandment binds the tongue to its good behaviour, God hath ſet two fences to keep in the tongue, the *teeth and lips*: and this commandment is a third fence ſet about it, that it ſhould not break forth into evil; *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.* This commandment hath a prohibitory, and a mandatory part: the firſt is ſet down in plain words, the other is clearly implied.

1. *The prohibitory part of the commandment*, or, what it forbids in general. It forbids any thing which may tend to the diſparagement or prejudice of our neighbour. More particularly, two things are forbidden in this commandment. (1.) Slandering. (2.) Falſe witneſs.

(1.) *Slandering our neighbour.* This is a ſin againſt the ninth commandment. The ſcorpion carries his poiſon in his tail, the ſlanderer carries his poiſon in his tongue. Slandering, *is to report things of others unjuſtly*, *Pſ. xxxv. 11. They laid things to my charge which I knew not.* It is uſual to bring in a Chriſtian beheaded of his good name: they raiſed a ſlander of Paul, that he ſhould preach, *Men might do evil, that good might come of it.* *Rom. iii. 8. We are ſlanderoſly reported; and ſome affirm that we ſay, let us do evil, that good may come.* Eminency is commonly blaſted by ſlander. Holineſs itſelf

is no ſhield for ſlander. The lamb's innocency will not preſerve it from the wolf. Chriſt was the moſt innocent upon earth, yet was reported to be a friend of ſinners: *John Baptiſt*, a man of an holy aſtute life, yet they ſaid of him, *he had a devil*, *Mat. xi. 18.* The ſcripture calls ſlandering, *ſmiting with the tongue.* *Jer. xviii. 18. Come and let us ſmite him with the tongue.* You may ſmite another and never touch him. *Majora ſunt lingue vulnera quam gladii*, Aug. The wounds of the tongue no phyſician can heal: and to pretend frienſhip to a man, yet ſlander him, is moſt odious. St. Hierom ſpeaks thus, *The Arrian ſaction made a ſhew of kindneſs; they kiſſed my hands; but ſlandered me, and ſought my life.* And, as it is a ſin againſt this commandment, to raiſe a falſe report of another; ſo it is a ſin to receive a falſe report before we have examined it, *Pſ. xv. 1. Lord, who ſhall dwell in thy holy hill? Quis ad coelum? v. iii. He that backbiteth not, nor taketh up a reproach againſt his neighbour.* We muſt not only not raiſe a falſe report, but not take it up. He that raiſeth a ſlander, carries the devil in his tongue; and he that receives it, carries the devil in his ear.

(2.) The ſecond thing forbidden in this commandment, is *falſe witneſs*. Here three ſins are condemned: (1.) *Speaking.* (2.) *Witneſſing.* (3.) *Swearing*, that which is falſe, *contra proximum.*

1. *Speaking that which is falſe*, *Prov. xii. 22. Lying.*

*Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.* To lie, is to speak that which one knows to be an untruth. There is nothing more contrary to God than a lie. The Holy Ghost is called the *Spirit of Truth*, 1 John iv. 5, 6. Lying is a sin that doth not go alone; it ushers in other sins: *Absalom* told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at *Hebron*, 2 Sam. xvi. 7. and this lie was a preface to his treason. Where there is a lie in the tongue, it shows the devil is in the heart, *Acts* v. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?* Lying is such a sin, as unfits men for civil society. How can you converse or bargain with him, that you cannot trust a word he saith? This is a sin which highly provokes God. *Annas* and *Sapphira* were struck dead for telling a lie, *Acts* v. 5. The furnace of hell is heated for liars, *Rev.* xxii. 15. *Without are forcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* Oh abhor this sin! *Quicquid dixeris juratum putes*, Hierom. When thou speakest, let thy word be as authentic as thy oath. Imitate God, who is the pattern of truth. *Pythagoras* being asked, what made men like God? answered, *cum vera loquantur*, when they speak truth. It is made the character of a man that shall go to heaven, *Pf.* xv. 2. *He speaketh the truth from his heart.*

2. That which is condemned in the commandment is, 'witnessing that which is false; thou shalt not bear false witness.' There is a two-fold bearing of false witness. (1.) There is a bearing of false witness for another. 2. A bearing false witness against another.

1st. A bearing false witness for another. When we do give our testimony for a person that is criminal and guilty, we justify him as if he were innocent, *Isa.* iii. 23. *Which justify the wicked for a reward.* He that goes to make a wicked man just, makes himself unjust.

2dly, There is a bearing false witness against another, i. e. when we accuse another in open court falsely. This is to imitate the devil, who is the *accuser of the brethren*. Though the devil is no adulterer, yet he is a false witness, *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* xxv. 18. *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a hammer and a sword: in his face he is hardened like an hammer; he cannot blush, he cares not what lie he witnesseth to: and he is a sword; his tongue is a sword to wound him he witnesseth against in his goods or life: thus, 1 Kings* xxi. 13. *There came in two men, children of Belial, and witnessed against Naboth, saying, Na-*

*both did blaspheme God and the king: and their witness took away his life.* The queen of *Persia* being sick, the magicians accused two godly virgins, that they had by charms procured the queen's sickness; whereupon she caused these virgins to be fawn asunder. A false witness doth pervert the place of judicature: he corrupts the jury; his bearing false witness makes them give in a false verdict: and he corrupts the judge, by making him pronounce a wrong sentence, and cause the innocent to suffer. Vengeance will find out the false witness, *Prov.* xxix. 5. *A false witness shall not be unpunished.* *Deut.* xix. 18, 19. *If the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother; i. e.* If he had thought to have taken away his life, his own life shall go for it.

3. That which is condemned in the commandment is, *swearing that which is false.* When men take a false oath, and by that take away the life of another. *Zech.* viii. 17. 'Love no false oath. chap. v. 2. What seest thou? I said, a flying roll. verse 3, 4. This is the curse that goeth forth, and it shall enter, saith the Lord, into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall consume his house, with the timber and stones of it.' The *Scythians* made a law, when a man did bind two sins together, a lie with an oath, he was to lose his head; because this sin did take away all truth and faith among men. The devil hath taken great possession of such who dare swear to a lie. This is a manifest breach of this commandment.

*Use I. Branch 1.* It reproves the church of *Rome*, who will dispense with a lie, or a false oath, if it be to promote the catholic cause. They approve of an officious lie; they hold some lies to be lawful; they may as well hold some sins to be lawful. God hath no need of our lie. It is not lawful to tell a lie *propter Dei gloriam*, if we are sure to bring glory to God by it, as *Austin* speaks.

*Branch 2.* It reproves those who make no conscience of slandering others; they come under the breach of this commandment, *Pf.* i. 20. *Thou sittest and slanderest thy own mother's son.* *Jer.* xx. 10. *Report, say they, and we will report,* *Ezra* iv. 15. *This city? i. e. (Jerusalem) is a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and provinces.* *Paul* was slandered as a mover of sedition, and the



the head of a faction, *Acts* xxiv. 5. The same word signifies both a slanderer and a devil, *1 Tim.* iii. 11. *Not slanderers*: In the Greek, *Not Devils*. Some think it no great matter, to misreport and slander others; know that this is to act the part of a devil. Clipping a man's credit, to make it weigh lighter, is worse than clipping of coin. The slanderer wounds *three at once*: he wounds him that he slanders; and he wounds him to whom he reports the slander, by causing uncharitable thoughts to arise up in his mind against the party slandered; and he wounds his own soul, by reporting that of another which is false. This is a great sin; and I would, I could not say, *it is common*. You may kill a man as well in his name as in his person. Some are loth to take away their neighbour's goods; conscience would fly in their face; but better take away their corn out of their field, their wares out of their shop, than take away their good name. This is a sin you can never make them reparation for; a blot in a man's name, being like a blot in a white paper, which will never be got out. Surely God will visit for this sin. If idle words shall be accounted for, shall not unjust slanders? The Lord will make inquisition one day, as well for names as for blood. Oh therefore take heed of this sin! it is a breach of the ninth commandment. Was it a sin under the law to defame a virgin, *Deut.* xxii. 19. And, is it not a greater sin to defame a saint, who is a member of Christ? The heathens by the light of nature, abhorred this sin of slanderings. *Diogenes* used to say, *Of all wild beasts, a slanderer is the worst*. *Antonius* made a law, that, if a person could not prove the crime he reported another to be guilty of, he should be put to death.

*Branch 3.* It reproves them who are so wicked, as to bear false witness against others. These are monsters in nature, unfit to live in a civil society. *Eusebius* relates of one *Narcissus*, a man famous for piety, who was accused by two false witnesses of unchastity; and, to prove their accusation, they bound it with oaths and curses after this manner: one said, *If I speak not true, I pray God I may perish by fire*: the other said, *If I speak not true, I wish I may be deprived of my sight*. It pleased God, that the first witness who forswore himself, his house being set on fire, he was burned in the flame: the other witness, being troubled in conscience, confessed his perjury, and continued so long

weeping, that he wept himself blind. *Jezabel*, who suborned two false witnesses against *Naboth*, she was thrown down out of a window, and *the dogs licked her blood*, *2 Kings* ix. 33. O tremble at this! a perjured person is the devil's excrement. He is cursed in his name, and seared in his conscience. Hell gapes for such a wind-fall.

*Use II. Branch 1.* It exhorts all to take heed of the breach of this commandment, of lying, slandering, and bearing false witness; and to avoid these sins,

1. Get the fear of God. Why doth *David* say, *the fear of the Lord is clean*? *Pf.* xix. 8. Because it cleanseth the heart of malice, it cleanseth the tongue of slander. *The fear of the Lord is clean*; it is to the soul as lightning to the air which cleanseth it.

2. Get *Love* to your neighbour, *Lev.* xix. 18. If we love a friend, we will not speak or attest any thing to his prejudice. Mens minds are cankered with envy and hatred: hence comes slandering and false-witness. Love is a lovely grace; *love thinks no evil*, *1 Cor.* xiii. 5. It makes the best interpretation of another's words. Love is a well-wisher, and it is rare to speak ill of him we wish well to. Love is that which cements Christians together; it is the healer of division, and the hinderer of slander.

*Branch 2.* To such whose lot it is to meet with slanderers and false accusers, (1.) Labour to make a sanctified use of it. When *Shimei* railed on *David*, *David* made a sanctified use of it, *2 Sam.* xvi. 10. *The Lord hath said to him, curse David*. So, if you are slandered or falsely accused, make a good use of it. See if you have no sin unrepented of, for which God may suffer you to be calumniated and reproached. See if you have not at any time wronged others in their name, and said that of them which you cannot prove; then lay your hand on your mouth, and confess the Lord is righteous to let you fall under the scourge of the tongue. (2.) If you are slandered, or falsely accused, but know your own innocency, be not too much troubled, let this be your rejoicing, the witness of your conscience. *Murus abeneus esto nil conscire sibi*. A good conscience is a wall of brass, that will be able to stand against a false witness. As no flattery can heal a bad conscience, so no slander can hurt a good. God will clear up the names of his people, *Pf.* xxxvii. 6. *He shall bring forth thy righteousnesses as the light*. God, as he will wipe away tears from the eyes, so he will wipe off

off reproaches from the name. Believers shall come forth out of all their slanders and reproaches, as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

Branch 3. It should exhort such to be very thankful to God; whom God hath preserved from slander and false witness. Job calls it, *The scourge of the tongue*, chap. v. 21. As a rod doth scourge the back, so the slanderer's tongue doth scourge the name. It is a great mercy to be kept from the scourge of the tongue; a mercy, that God stops malignant mouths from bearing false witness. What mischief may not a lying report or a false oath do? One destroys the name, the other the life. It is the Lord that muzzles the mouths of the wicked, and keeps these dogs, that snarl at us, from flying upon us, *Pf. xxxi. 20. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.* It is, I suppose, an allusion to kings, who being resolved to protect their favourites against the accusations of men, take them into their bed-chamber, or bosom, where none may touch them: so God hath a pavilion, or secret hiding-place for his favourites, where he preserves their credit and reputation untouched; he keeps them from the *strife of tongues.* This is a mercy we ought to acknowledge to God.

II. The mandatory part of this command-

ment implied, that is, *That we stand up for others, and vindicate them, when they are injured by lying lips.* This is the sense of the commandment, not only that we should not slander, or falsely accuse others; but that we should witness for them, and stand up in their defence, when we know them to be traduced. A man may wrong another as well by silence as by slander; when he knows him to be wrongfully accused, yet doth not speak in his behalf. If others cast false aspersions on any, we should wipe them off. The apostles (who were filled with the wine of the Spirit) being charged with drunkenness, Peter was their compurgator, and openly cleared their innocence, *Acts ii. 15. These are not drunken, as ye suppose.* Jonathan knowing David to be a worthy man, and all those things Saul said of him to be slanders, vindicated David, *1 Sam. xix. 4, 5. David hath not sinned against thee, but his works to thee-ward have been very good. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, and slay David without a cause?* When the primitive Christians were falsely accused for incest, and killing their children, Tertullian made a famous apology in their vindication. This is to act the part both of a friend and of a Christian, to be an advocate for another, when he is wronged in his good name.

## OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's.*

THIS commandment forbids, (1.) Covetousness in general, *Thou shalt not covet.* (2.) In particular, *Thy neighbour's house, thy neighbour's wife, &c.*

1. It forbids covetousness in general, *Thou shalt not covet.* 'Tis lawful to use the world, yea, and to desire so much of it as may, (1.) Keep us from the temptation of poverty, *Prov. xxx. 8. Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* (2.) As may enable us to honour God with works of mercy, *Prov. iii. 9. Honour the Lord with thy substance.* But all the danger is, when the world

gets into the heart. The water is useful for the sailing of the ship; all the danger is when the water gets into the ship; so the fear is, when the world gets into the heart, *Thou shalt not covet.*

Qu. *What is it to covet?*

Ans. There are two words in the Greek, which set forth the nature of covetousness. 1. *Pleonexia*, which signifies an insatiable desire of getting the world. Covetousness is a dry droply. Austin defines covetousness, *Plus velle quam sat est*; to desire more than enough; to aim at a great estate; to be like the daughters of



of the horse-leech, crying, *Give, give*, Prov. xxx. 15. Or like *Behemoth*, Job xl. 23. *He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.* 2. *Phylargyria*, which signifies an inordinate love of the world. The world is the idol; it is so loved, that a man will not part with it to any good use; this is to come under the indictment of covetousness. He may be said to be covetous, not only who gets the world unrighteously, but who loves the world inordinately. But, for a more full answer to the question, *What is it to covet?* I shall shew you in six particulars, when a man may be said to be given to covetousness.

1. When his thoughts are wholly taken up about the world. As a good man's thoughts are still in heaven; he is thinking of Christ's love, and eternal recompense, *Pf. cxxxix. 18. When I awake, I am still with thee*, that is, by divine contemplation; so a covetous man is still with the world; his mind is wholly taken up about it; he can think of nothing but his shop or farm. The fancy is a mint-house, and most of the thoughts a covetous man mints are worldly: he is always plotting and projecting about the things of this life; like a virgin that hath all her thoughts running upon her suitor.

2. A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when he takes more pains for the getting of earth, than for the getting of heaven. He will turn every stone, break his sleep, take many a weary step for the world; but will take no pains for Christ, or heaven. The *Gauls*, who were an antient people of *France*, after they had tasted of the sweet wine of the *Italian* grape, they enquired after the country, and never rested till they had arrived at it; so a covetous man, having had a relish of the world, pursues after it, and never leaves till he hath got it; but he neglects the things of eternity. He could be content if salvation would drop into his mouth, as a ripe fig drops into the mouth of the eater, *Nahum iii. 12.* But he is loth to put himself to too much sweat or trouble to obtain Christ or salvation. He hunts for the world, he wisheth only for heaven.

3. A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when all his discourse is about the world, *John iii. 31. He that is of the earth, speaketh of the earth.* As it is a sign of godliness, to be still speaking of heaven, to have the tongue tuned to the language of *Canaan*, *Ecd. x. 12. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious*; he speaks as if he had been already

in heaven; so, a sign of a man given to covetousness, he is speaking of secular things, his wares and drugs. A covetous man's breath, like a dying man's, smells strong of the earth. As they said to *Peter*, *thy speech bewrayeth thee*, *Matth. xxvi. 73.* So a covetous man's speech bewrayeth him: he is like the fish in the gospel, which had a piece of money in the mouth, *Matth. xvii. 27. Verba sunt speculum mentis*, *Bern.* The words are the looking-glass of the heart, they shew what is within; *Ex abundantia cordis.*

4. A man is given to covetousness, when he doth so set his heart upon worldly things, that, for the love of them, he will part with heavenly; for the wedge of gold, he will part with the pearl of price. The young man in the gospel, when Christ said, *Sell all and come and follow me*; abhorring himself, he went away sorrowful, *Matt. xix. 22.* He would rather part with Christ, than with his earthly possessions. *Cardinal Burben* said, he would forego his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in *Paris*. When it comes to a critical point, that men must either relinquish their estate or Christ, and they will rather part with Christ and a good conscience, than with their estate; it is a clear case they are possessed with the devil of covetousness.

5. A man is given to covetousness, when he overloads himself with worldly business. He hath many irons in the fire; he is in this sense a pluralist, he takes so much business upon him, that he cannot find time to serve God; he hath scarce time to eat his meat, but no time to pray. When a man doth over-charge himself with the world, and, as *Martha*, cumber himself about many things that he cannot have time for his soul, sure he is under the power of covetousness.

6. He is given to covetousness whose heart is so set upon the world, that, to get it, he cares not what unlawful indirect means he useth: he will have the world *per fas & nefas*; he will wrong and defraud, and raise his estate upon the ruins of another, *Hos. xii. 7, 8. The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress. And Ephraim said, yet I am become rich. Pope Silvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.*

Use, *Take heed and beware of covetousness*, *Luke xii. 15.* It is a direct breach of this tenth commandment. Covetousness is a moral vice, it infects and pollutes the whole soul. The sin.

(1.) It

(1.) It is a *subtil sin*, a sin that many do not so well discern in themselves: as some have the scurvy, yet do not know it. This sin can dress itself in the attire of virtue. It is called the *cloak of covetousness*, 1 Thess. ii. 5. Covetousness is a sin that wears a cloak, it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and good husbandry. It hath many pleas and excuses for itself, more than any other sin; as, the providing for one's family. The more subtil the sin is, the less discernable.

(2.) Covetousness is a dangerous sin, it checks all that is good. It is an *enemy to grace*; it damps good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The hedge-hog, in the fable, came to the coney-boroughs in stormy weather, and desired harbour; but when once he had gotten entertainment, he set up his prickles, and did never leave till he had thrust the poor coneys out of their boroughs: so covetousness, by fair pretences, wins itself into the heart; but, as soon as you have let it in, it will never leave till it hath choaked all good beginnings, and thrust all religion out of your hearts. *Covetousness hinders the efficacy of the word preached*. In the parable, the *thorns* (which Christ expounded to be the cares of this life) choaked the *good seed*, Matth. xiii. 7. Many sermons ly dead, buried in earthly hearts. We preach to men, to get their hearts in heaven; but where covetousness is predominant, it chains them to the earth, and makes them like the woman which Satan had bowed together, that she could not lift up herself, Luke xiii. 11. You may as well bid an elephant fly in the air, as a covetous man live by faith. We preach to men to give freely to Christ's poor; but covetousness makes him to be like him in the gospel who had a *withered hand*, Mark iii. 1. They have a withered hand, and cannot stretch it out to the poor. It is impossible to be earthly-minded, and charitably-minded. Thus covetousness obstructs the efficacy of the word, and makes it prove abortive. Such, whose hearts are rooted in the earth, will be so far from profiting by the word, that they will be ready rather to deride it, Luke xvi. 14. *The Pharisees, who were covetous, derided him*.

(3.) Covetousness is a mother-sin, a radical vice, 1 Tim. vi. 10. *The love of money is the root of all evil*.

----- *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis auri sacra fames?*----- Virg.

He who hath this spiritual itch, a greedy de-

fire of getting the world, hath in him the root of all sin. Covetousness is a mother-sin. I shall make it appear that covetousness is a breach of all the ten commandments. (1.) It breaks the first commandment, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but one*. The covetous man hath more gods than one; *mammon* is his god. He hath a god of gold, therefore he is called an *idolater*, Col. iii. 5. (2.) Covetousness breaks the second commandment, *Thou shalt not make any graven image, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them*. A covetous man bows down, tho' not to the graven image in the church, yet to the graven image in his coin. (3.) Covetousness is a breach of the third commandment, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. *Abshalom's* design was to get his father's crown, there was covetousness; but he talks of paying his *vow to God*, there he took God's name in vain. (4.) Covetousness is a breach of the fourth commandment, *Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy*. A covetous man doth not keep the sabbath holy; he will ride to fairs on a sabbath; instead of reading in the Bible, he will cast up his accounts. (5.) Covetousness is a breach of the fifth commandment, *Honour thy father and thy mother*. A covetous person will not honour his father, if he doth not feed him with money; nay, he will get his father to make over his estate to him in his lifetime, and so the father shall be at the son's command. (6.) Covetousness is a breach of the sixth commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*. Covetous *Ahab* killed *Naboth*, to get his vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 13. How many have swimm'd to the crown in blood! (7.) Covetousness is a breach of the seventh commandment, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. Covetousness causeth uncleanness: you read of the *Hire of a whore*, Deut. xxiii. 18. An adulteress for money sets both conscience and chastity to sale. (8.) Covetousness is a breach of the eighth commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*. Covetousness is the *root of theft*; covetous *Achan* stole the wedge of gold. Therefore *thieves* and *covetous* are put together, 1 Cor. vi. 10. (9.) Covetousness is a breach of the ninth commandment, *Thou shalt not bear false witness*. What makes the perjurer take a false oath but covetousness? He hopes for a dividend. And, (10.) It is plainly a breach of the last commandment, *Thou shalt not covet*. The *mammonist* covets his neighbour's house and goods, and endeavours to get them into his own hands. Thus you see how vile a sin covetous-



ness is, it is a mother-sin, it is a plain breach of every one of the ten commandments.

(4.) Covetousness is a sin dishonourable to religion. For such as say their *hopes* are above, yet their *hearts* are below : for them who profess to be above the stars, to *lick the dust* of the serpent ; to be born of God, yet buried in the earth : how dishonourable is this to religion ! The lapwing wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung ; an emblem of such as profess to be crowned kings and priests unto God, yet feed immoderately on these terrene dung-hill comforts, *Jer. xlv. 5. And seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not* : What, thou Barak, who art ennobled by the new birth, and art illustrious by the office, a Levite, dost thou seek earthly things, and seek them now ? When the ship is sinking, art thou trimming thy cabbin ? O do not so degrade thyself, nor blot thy scutcheon ! *Seekest thou great things? seek them not.* The higher grace is, the less earthly should Christians be : the higher the sun is, the shorter always is the shadow.

1. Covetousness exposeth us to God's abhorrence, *Pf. x. 3. The covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.* A king abhors to see his statue abused ; God abhors to see a man made in his image should have the heart of a beast given to him. Who would live in such a sin as makes him abhorred of God ? whom God abhors he curseth, and God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

2. Covetousness precipitates men to ruin : it shuts them out of heaven, *Eph. v. 3. This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* What should a covetous man do in heaven ? God can no more converse with them, than a king can converse with a swine, *1 Tim. vi. 9. They that will be rich fall into a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition.* A covetous man is like a bee, that gets into a barrel of honey, and there drowns itself : he is like a ferry-man, that takes in so many passengers to increase his fare, that he sinks his boat ; so a covetous man takes in more gold to the increasing of his estate, that he damns himself in perdition. I have read of some inhabitants near *Athens*, who lived in a very dry, barren island, and they took much pains to draw a river to this island to water it and make it fruitful ; but when they had opened the passages, and brought the river to it, the water broke in with such a force, that it drowned the land, and all the people in it : an emblem of a covetous man ; he labours to draw riches to him, and at last they come in in such abundance, that they drown him in hell and perdition. How many, to build up an estate, pull down their souls ? Oh therefore flee from covetousness. I shall next prescribe some remedies against covetousness.

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EXOD. XX. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, &c.*

I Am, in the next place, to resolve a question, *How we may do to cure this itch of covetousness ?*

*Ans.* For answer to this, I shall prescribe some remedies and antidotes against this sin.

1. Faith, *1 John v. 4. This is the victory over the world, even your faith.* The root of covetousness is, the distrust of God's providence : faith believes God will provide ; God who feeds the birds, will feed his children ; he who clothes the lilies, will clothe his lambs : and so faith overcomes the world. Faith is the cure of care ; faith not only purifies the heart but sanctifies the heart ; faith makes God our portion, and so in him we have enough, *Pf. xvi. 5. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant*

*places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Faith, by a divine chymistry, extracts its chief comfort out of God. A little with God is sweet. Thus faith is a remedy against covetousness ; faith overcomes, not only the fear of the world, but the love of the world.

2. The second remedy is, judicious consideration.

(1.) What *poor things* these things below are, that we should covet them. 1. They are *below the worth of the soul*, which carries in it an idea and resemblance of God. The world is but the workmanship of God, the soul is the image of God. 2. You covet that which will not satisfy you, *Eccl. v. 10. He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver.* Solomon had put all the creatures in a limbeck, and stilled

filled out the quintessence, and behold, *All was vanity*, Eccl. ii. 11. Covetousness is a dry dropsey; the more a man hath, the more he thirsts.

*Quo plus sunt potae, plus sitiuntur aquae.*

3. Worldly things cannot remove trouble of mind. King Saul being perplexed in conscience, all his crown-jewels could not administer comfort to him, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. The things of the world will no more ease a troubled spirit, than a gold-cap will cure the head-ach. 4. The things of the world, if you had more of them, cannot continue with you. The creature hath a little honey in its mouth, but it hath wings to fly away. These things either go from us, or we from them: what *poor things* are these to covet?

(2.) Second consideration, the *frame and contexture of the body*: God hath made the face to look upwards towards heaven.

*Os homini sublime dedit, coelumque tueri*

*Iussit.*-----

Ovid.

Anatomists observe, that whereas other creatures have but four muscles to their eyes, man hath a fifth muscle, by which he is able to look up to heaven; and as for the heart, it is made like a glass-viol, narrow and contracted downwards, but wide and broad upwards. And as the frame and contexture of the body teacheth us to look to things above, so especially the soul is planted in the body, as a divine sparkle to ascend upwards. Can it be imagined that God gave us intellectual, immortal souls, to covet only earthly things? What wise man would fish for gudgeons with golden hooks? Did God give us glorious souls, only to fish for the world? Sure our souls are made for an higher end; to aspire after the enjoyment of God in glory.

(3.) Third consideration, the *examples* of those who have been contemners and despisers of the world. The primitive Christians, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* observes, were sequestred from the world, and were wholly taken up in converse with God: they lived in the world above the world; like the birds of paradise, who soar above in the air, and seldom or never touch with their feet upon the earth. *Iulius* saith, that he was never tempted to this sin of covetousness. The saints of old though they did live in the world, they did trade in heaven, *Phil.* iii. 20. *Our conversation is in heaven*: the Greek word signifies, our commerce, or traffic, or burghership, is in heaven. *Enoch* walked with God, Gen. v. 24. His affections were sublimated,

he did take a turn in heaven every day. The righteous are compared to a *palm-tree*, Ps. xcii. 12. *Philo* observes, that whereas all other trees have their sap in their root, the sap of the palm-tree, is towards the top; the emblem of the saints, whose hearts are above in heaven, where their treasure is.

3. The third remedy, covet spiritual things more, and you will covet earthly things less. Covet grace; grace is the best blessing, it is the seed of God, 1 *John* iii. 9. the angels glory. Covet heaven; heaven is the region of happiness, it is the most pleasant climate. Did we covet heaven more, we should covet earth less. They that stand on the top of the *Alps*, the great cities of *Campania* seem but as small villages in their eye: if we could have our hearts more fixed upon the *Jerusalem* above, how would all worldly things disappear, and be as nothing in our eye; we read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right foot on the sea and with his left foot on the earth, *Rev.* x. 2. had we but once been in heaven, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot upon the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea! Oh covet after heavenly things; there is the tree of life, the mountains of spices, the rivers of pleasure, the honey-comb of God's love dropping, the delights of angels, the flower of joy fully ripe and blown. There is the pure air to breathe in; no fogs or vapours of sin arise to infect that air, but the sun of righteousness enlightens that horizon continually with its glorious beams. O let your thoughts and delights be always taken up about the city of pearl, the paradise of God. Did we covet heavenly things more, we should covet earthly things less. It is reported after *Lazarus* was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile or be delighted with the world after: were our hearts raised by the power of the Holy Ghost up to heaven, we should not be much taken with earthly things.

4. The fourth remedy, pray for an heavenly mind. Lord, let the loadstone of thy spirit draw my heart upward: Lord, dig the earth out of my heart; teach me how to possess the world, and not love it; how to hold it in my hand, and not let it get into my heart. So much for the commandment in general, *Thou shalt not covet.*

(2.) I shall speak of it more particularly: *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt*



*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, &c.* Observe here the holiness and perfection of God's law: It forbids the *motus prime primi*, the first motions and risings of sin in the heart; *Thou shalt not covet.* The laws of men take hold of the actions, but the law of God goes further, it forbids not only the actions, but the affections; *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.* It is not said, thou shalt not take away his house; but *Thou shalt not covet it.* These lustings and desires after the forbidden fruit are sinful, *Rom. vii. 7. The law hath said, Thou shalt not covet.* Though the tree bears no bad fruit, it may be faulty at the root; though a man doth not commit any gross sin, yet who can say his heart is pure? There may be a faultiness at the root, there may be sinful coverings and lustings in the soul.

*Use.* Let us be humbled for the sin of our nature, the risings of evil thoughts, coveting that which we ought not. Our nature is a seed-plot of iniquity, it is like charcoal that is ever sparkling: the sparkles of pride, envy, covetousness, arise in the mind. How should this humble us! If there be not sinful actings, there are sinful covetings. Let us pray for mortifying grace, which may be like the water of jealousy, to make the thigh of sin to rot. But to come to the words more nearly, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor thy neighbour's wife, &c.*

*Qu. Why is the house put before the wife?* In Deuteronomy the wife is put first, *Deut. v. 21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house.* Here the house is put first.

*Ans.* In Deuteronomy, the wife is set down first, in respect of her value. She (if a good wife) is of far greater value and estimate than the house, *Prov. xxxi. 10. Her price is far above rubies.* She is the furniture of the house, and this furniture is more worth than the house. When *Alexander* had overcome king *Darius* in battle, *Darius* seemed not to be much dismayed; but when he heard his wife was taken prisoner, now his eyes, like spouts, did gush forth water, as valuing his wife dearer than his life. But yet, in this place in *Exodus*, the house is put before the wife: the reason is, because the house is first in order; the house is erected before the wife can live in it; the nest is built before the bird is in it: the wife is first esteemed, but the house must be first provided.

1. Then, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's*

*house.* How depraved is man since the fall! man knows not how to keep within bounds, but is coveting more than his own. *Achab*, one would think, had enough; he was a king, and one would suppose his crown-revenues should have contented him; but still he was coveting more: *Naboth's* vineyard was in his eye, and stood near the smoke of his chimney, and he could not be quiet till he had it in possession. Were there not so much coveting, there would not be so much bribing: one man pulls away another's house from him. It is only the prisoner lives in such a tenement as he may be sure none will go about to take from him.

2. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.* This commandment is a bridle to check the inordinacy of brutish lusts; *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.* It was the devil that sowed another man's ground, *Mat. xiii. 25.* But how is the hedge of this commandment trodden down in our times! there be many who do more than covet their neighbour's wives, they take them, *Deut. xxvii. 20. Cursed be he that lies with his father's wife, and all the people shall say Amen.* If it were to be proclaimed, *Cursed be he that lies with his neighbour's wife;* and all that were guilty should say *Amen*, how many would curse themselves!

3. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's man-servant, nor his maid-servant.* Servants, when faithful, are a treasure. What a true and trusty servant had *Abraham*! he was his right-hand: how prudent and faithful was he in the matter he was entrusted with, in getting a wife for his master's son! *Gen. xxiv. 9.* And surely, it would have gone near to *Abraham*, to have had any one entice away his servant from him. But this sin of coveting servants is common: if one hath a better servant, others will be inveigling and laying baits for him, and endeavour to draw him away from his master. This is a sin against the tenth commandment. To steal away another's servant by enticement, is no better than thievery.

4. *Nor his Ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.* Were there not coveting of ox and ass, there would not be so much stealing; first, men break the tenth commandment by coveting, and then they break the eighth commandment by stealing. It was an excellent appeal that *Samuel* made to the people, *1 Sam. xii. 3. Witness against me before the Lord, whose ox have I taken, or whose ass, or whom have I defrauded.*

*defrauded. And it was a brave speech of St. Paul, Acts xx. 33. I have coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel.*

*Qu. But what means may we use to keep us from coveting that which is our neighbour's.*

*Ans.* The best remedy is contentation. If we are content with our own, we shall not covet that which is another's. St. Paul could say, *I have coveted no man's gold or silver*: whence was this? It was from contentment, *Phil. iv. 11. I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.* Content saith, as *Jacob, Gen. iii. 3. I have enough*: I have a promise of heaven, and have sufficient to bear my charges thither; I have enough. And he who hath enough, will not covet that which is another's. *Be content*: and the best way to be contented, is, (1.) Believe that condition best which God carves out to you by his providence. If God had seen it fit for us to have more, we should have had it; but his wisdom sees this best for us. Perhaps we could not manage a great estate, it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Great

estates may be snares; a boat may be overturned by having too great a sail. The believing that estate best God carves for us, makes us content; and being contented, we will not covet that which is another's.

(2.) The way to be content with such things as we have, and not to covet another's, is to consider, the less estate we have, the less account we shall have to give at the last day. Every person is a steward and must be accountable to God. They who have great estates have the greater reckoning: God will say, what good have you done with your estates? have you honoured me with your substance? Where are the poor you have fed and clothed? If you cannot give a good account, it will be sad. This may make us contented with a less portion, to consider, the less estate, the less account we have to give; the less riches, the less reckoning. This is the way to have contentment, and no better antidote against coveting that which is another's, than being content with that which is your own.

So much for the Commandments.

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The END of the First VOLUME.

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## MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE MORAL LAW.

**Q.** *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

**Ans.** No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

JAM. iii. 2. *In many things we offend all.* Man, in his primitive state of innocence, was endowed with ability to keep the whole moral law: *Adam* had rectitude of mind, sanctity of will, perfection of power: *Adam* had the copy of God's law written in his heart; no sooner did God command, but he did obey: as the key is suited to all the wards in the lock, and can open them; so *Adam* had a power suited to all God's commands, and could obey them. *Adam's* obedience did exactly run parallel with the moral law, as a well made dial goes exactly with the sun. Man in innocence was like a well tuned organ, he did sweetly tune to the will of God: he was adorned with holiness as the angels, but not confirmed in holiness as the angels: *Adam* was holy, but mutable; he fell from his purity, and we with him. Sin cut the lock of original righteousness, where our strength lay; sin hath brought such a languor and faintness into our souls, and hath so weakened us, that we shall never recover our full strength till we put on immortality. The thing I am now to demonstrate, is, that we cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law. *In many things we offend all.*

1. The case of an unregenerate man is such, that he cannot perfectly obey all God's commands: he may as well touch the stars, or span the ocean, as yield exact obedience to the law. A person unregenerate cannot act spiritually, he cannot pray in the Holy Ghost, he cannot live by faith, he cannot do duty out of love to duty; and if he cannot do duty spiritually, then much less perfectly. Now, that a natural man cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law, is evident; (1.) Because he is spiritually dead, *Eph. ii. 1.* And, being so, how can he keep the commandments of God perfectly? A dead man is not fit for action. A sinner hath

the symptoms of death upon him; 1. he hath no sense; a dead man hath no sense: he hath no sense of the evil of sin, of God's holiness and veracity; therefore he is said to be without feeling, *Eph. iv. 19.* 2. He hath no strength, *Rom. v. 6.* What strength hath a dead man? A natural man hath no strength to deny himself, to resist temptation; he is dead: and can a dead man fulfil the moral law? (2.) A natural man cannot perfectly keep all God's commandments, because he is so interlarded with sin; he is *born in sin*, *Pf. li. 5.* *Job xv. 16.* *He drinks iniquity as water. All the imaginations of his thoughts are evil, and only evil,* *Gen. vi. 5.* Now, the least evil thought is a breach of the royal law: and, if there be defection, there cannot be perfection. And, as a natural man hath no power to keep the moral law, so he hath no will. He is not only dead, but worse than dead: a dead man doth no hurt, but there is a life of resistance against God goes along with the death of sin: a natural man not only cannot keep the law through weakness, but he breaks it through wilfulness, *Jer. xlv. 17.* *We will do whatsoever goeth out of our mouth to burn incense to the queen of heaven.*

2. As the unregenerate cannot keep the moral law perfectly, so neither the regenerate, *Eccl. vii. 20.* *There is not a just man upon the earth, that doth good and sinneth not;* nay, that *sins not in doing good.* There's that in the best actions of a righteous man that is damnable, if God should weigh him in the balance of justice. Alas! how are his duties fly-blown? He cannot pray without wandering, nor believe without doubting, *Rom. vii. 18.* *To me to will is present, but how to perform I find not.* In the Greek it is, *How to do it thoroughly I find not.* Paul, though a saint of the first magnitude, was better at willing than at performing. Mary asked where they had laid Christ; she had a mind to have carried him away, but she wanted strength: so the regenerate have a will to obey God's law perfectly, but they want strength; their obedience is weak, and sickly: the mark they are to shoot at, is perfection of holiness, though they take



take a right aim, yet do what they can, they shoot short, *Rom. vii. 19. The good which I would, I do not.* A Christian, while he is serving God, is hindered: like a ferryman, that plies the oar, and rows hard, but a gust of wind carries him back again: so, saith *Paul, The good I would, I do not*; I am driven back by temptation. Now, if there be any failure in our obedience, we cannot make a perfect commentary upon God's law: no Christian alive can write a copy of holiness without blotting. The virgin *Mary's* obedience was not perfect, she needed Christ's blood to wash her tears. *Aaron* was to make atonement for the altar, *Exod. xxix. 36.* to shew that the most holy offering hath defilement in it, and needs atonement to be made for it.

Qu. 1. *But if a man hath no power to keep the whole moral law, then why doth God require that of man, which he is not able to perform? How doth this stand with his justice?*

Ans. Though man hath lost his power of obeying, God hath not lost his right of commanding. If a master intrusts a servant with money to lay out, and the servant spends it dissolutely, may not the master justly demand this money? God gave us a power to keep the moral law; we, by tampering with sin, lost it: But may not God still call for perfect obedience? or, in case of default, justly punish us?

Qu. 2. *But why doth God suffer such an impotency to ly upon man that he cannot perfectly keep the law?*

Ans. The Lord doth it, (1.) To humble us. Man is a self-exalting creature: and, if he hath but any thing of worth, he is ready to be puffed up: but when he comes to see his deficiencies and failings, and how far short he comes of the holiness and perfection God's law requires, this is a means to pull down his plumbs of pride, and lay them in the dust: he weeps over his impotency, he blusheth for his leprous spots; he saith, as *Job, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.* (2.) God lets this impotency and infirmness ly upon us, that we may have recourse to Christ, to obtain pardon for our defects, and to sprinkle our best duties with his blood. When a man sees himself indebted, he owes perfect obedience to the law, but he hath nothing to pay: this makes him flee to Christ to be his friend, and answer all the demands and challenges of the law, and set him free in the court of justice.

Use 1. Is matter of humiliation for our fall in *Adam*. In the state of innocency we were perfectly holy; our minds were crowned with

knowledge, and our wills, as a queen, did sway the sceptre of liberty: but now we may say, as, *Lam. v. 16. The crown is fallen from our head.* We have lost that power which was inherent in us. When we look back to our primitive glory, when we shined as earthly angels, we may take up *Job's* words, ch. xxix. 2. *O that it were with us as in months past!* O that it were with us as at first, when there was no stain upon our virgin-nature, when there was a perfect harmony between God's law and man's will! but, alas! now the scene is altered, our strength is gone from us, we tread awry every step; we come below every precept; our warfiness will not reach the sublimity of God's law; we fail in our obedience; and, while we fail, we forfeit. This may put us in close mourning, and spring a leak of sorrow in all our souls.

Use II. Of confutation. Branch 1. It confutes the *Arminians*, who cry up the power of the will: they hold, they have a will to save themselves. But by nature, we not only want strength, *Rom. v. 6.* but we want will to that which is good. The will is not only full of impotency, but oblinacy, *Pf. lxxxii. 11. Israel would none of me.* The will hangs forth a flag of defiance against God. Such as speak of the sovereign power of the will, forget *Phil. ii. 13. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.* If the power be in the will of man, then what needs God to work in us to will? If the air can enlighten itself, what needs the sun to shine? Such as talk of the power of nature, and the ability they have to save themselves, they disparage Christ's merits. I may say, as *Gal. v. 4. Christ has become of no effect to them.* This I affirm, such as advance the power of their will in matters of salvation, without the medicinal grace of Christ, do absolutely put themselves under the covenant of works. And now I would ask them, *Can they perfectly keep the moral law? Malum oritur ex quolibet defectu.* If there be but the least defect in their obedience, they are gone: for one sinful thought, the law of God curseth them, and the justice of God arraigns them. Confounded be their pride, who cry up the power of nature, as if, by their own inherent abilities, they could rear up a building, the top whereof should reach to heaven.

Branch 2. It confutes a sort of people that brag of perfection; and according to that principle, they can keep all God's commandments perfectly.

I would ask these, have they at no time a vain thought come into their mind? If they have, then they are not perfect. The virgin *Mary* was not perfect; though her womb were pure (being overshadowed with the Holy Ghost) yet her soul was not perfect; Christ doth tacitely imply a failing in her, *Luke ii. 49.* And, are they more perfect than the blessed virgin was? Such as hold perfection, need not confess sin. *David* confessed sin, *Pf. xxxii. 6.* and *Paul* confessed sin, *Rom. vii. 24.* But they are got beyond *David* and *Paul*; they are perfect, they never transgress; and where there is no transgression, what needs confession?

2dly. If they are perfect, they need not ask pardon: as they can pay God's justice what they owe; therefore, what need they pray, *Forgive us our debt*? Oh that the devil should rock men so fast asleep, as to make them dream of perfection! and whereas they bring that, *Phil. iii. 15. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded.* *Ans.* Perfection there is meant of sincerity. God is best able to interpret his own word. He calls sincerity perfection, *Job. i. 8. A perfect and an upright man.* But who is exactly perfect? a man full of diseases may as well say he is healthful, as a man full of sin say, he is perfect.

*Use III.* To regenerate persons. Though you fail in your obedience, and cannot keep the moral law exactly, yet be not discouraged.

*Qu.* What comfort may be given to a regenerate person under the failures and imperfections of his obedience?

*Ans.* 1. That a believer is not under the covenant of works but the covenant of grace. The covenant of works requires perfect, personal, perpetual obedience: but, in the covenant of grace, God will make some abatements: he will accept of less than he required in the covenant of works.

(1.) In the covenant of works God required perfection of degrees; in the covenant of grace, he accepts perfection of parts: there he required perfect working, here he accepts sincere believing: in the covenant of works, God required us to live without sin; in the covenant of grace, God accepts of our combat with sin.

(2.) Though a Christian cannot, in his own person, perform all God's commandments; yet Christ, as his surety, and in his stead, hath fulfilled the law for him; and God accepts of Christ's obedience, which is perfect, to answer

for that obedience which is imperfect. Christ being made a curse for believers, all the curses of the law have their sting pulled out.

(3.) Though a Christian cannot keep the commands of God to satisfaction, yet he may to approbation:

*Qu.* How is that?

*Ans.* 1. He gives his full assent and consent to the law of God, *Rom. vii. 12. The law is holy and just*: there was assent in the judgment. *Rom. vii. 16. I consent to the law*: there was consent in the will.

2. A Christian mourns that he cannot keep the commandments fully: when he fails he weeps: he is not angry with the law, because it is so strict; but he is angry with himself, because he is so deficient.

3. He takes a sweet complacential delight in the law, *Rom. vii. 12. I delight in the law of God in the inward man.* [*Gr. Synedomai,*] *I take pleasure in it.* *Psal. cxix. 97. O how love I thy law!* Though a Christian cannot keep God's law, yet he loves his law; though he cannot serve God perfectly, yet he serves him willingly.

4. It is his cordial desire to walk in all God's commands, *Pf. cxix. 5. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes?* Though his strength fails, yet his pulse beats.

5. He doth really endeavour to obey God's law perfectly; and wherein he comes short, he runs to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This cordial desire, and real endeavour, God esteems as perfect obedience, *2 Cor. viii. 12. If there be a willing mind, it is accepted.* *Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice,* *Cant. ii. 14.* Though the prayers of the righteous are mixed with sin, yet God sees they would pray better: God picks out the weeds from the flowers; he sees the faith and winks at the failing. The saint's obedience, though he falls short of legal perfection, yet, having sincerity in it, and Christ's merits mixed with it, finds gracious acceptance. When the Lord sees endeavours after perfect obedience, this he takes well at our hands: as a father that receives a letter from his child, though there be blots in the letter, and false spellings, yet the father takes all in good part: O what blosings are there in our holy things! but God is pleased to take all in good part: saith God, it is my child, and he would do better if he could; I will accept it.



## ALL SINS NOT EQUALLY HEINOUS.

**Q.** *ARE all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

*Ans.* Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

**JOHN XIX. 11.** *He that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin.* The Stoic philosophers held, that all sins were equal: but this scripture clearly holds forth, that there is a gradual difference in sin; some are greater than others: some are *mighty sins*, Amos v. 12. and *criying sins*, Gen. xviii. 21. Every sin hath a voice to speak, but some sins cry. As some diseases are worse than others, and some poisons more venomous; so some sins are more heinous. Ezek. xvi. 47. *Jer. xvi. 12. You have done worse than your fathers, your sins have exceeded theirs.* Some sins have a blacker aspect than others: to clip the king's coin is treason, but to strike his person is a higher degree of treason. A vain thought is a sin, but a blasphemous word is a greater sin. That some sins are greater than others, appears, (1.) Because there was difference in the offerings under the law; the sin-offering was greater than the trespass-offerings. (2.) Because some sins are not capable of pardon as others are, therefore they must needs be more heinous, as the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Mat. xii. 31. (3.) Because some sins have a greater degree of punishment than others, Mat. xxiii. 14, 24. *Ye shall receive greater damnation. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* God would not punish one more than another, but that his sin is greater. It is true, *all sins are equally heinous in respect of the object*, or the person against whom sin is committed, viz. the Infinite God: but, in another sense, all sins are not alike heinous; some sins have more bloody circumstances in them, which are like the dye to the wool, to give it a deeper colour.

**Qu.** *What sins may be said to be more heinous than others?*

*Ans.* 1. Such sins as are committed without any occasion offered: a man swears or is angry; and hath no provocation. The less the occasion of sin is, the greater is the sin. 2. Such sins are more heinous, that are committed pre-

*sumptuously.* Under the law there was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, Numb. xv. 30.

**Qu.** *What is it to sin presumptuously, which doth heighten and aggravate sin, and make it more heinous?*

*Ans.* To sin presumptuously, is to sin against convictions and illuminations, or an enlightened conscience, Job. xxiv. 13. *They are of those that rebel against the light.* Conscience, like the cherubim, stands with a flaming sword in its hand, to deter the sinner; yet he will sin. Did not Pilate sin against conviction, and with an high hand, in condemning Christ? He knew that of envy the Jews had delivered him, Mat. xxvii. 18. he confessed, he found *no fault with him*, Luke xxiii. 14. and his own wife sent to him, saying, *have nothing to do with that just man*, Mat. xxvii. 19. Yet, for all this, he gave the sentence of death against Christ. Here he sinned *presumptuously*, against an enlightened conscience. To sin ignorantly, doth something extenuate and pare off the guilt, John xv. 22. *If I had not come, ye had had no sin*; that is, your sin had been less: but to sin against illuminations and convictions, doth enhance and accent mens sins. These sins make deep wounds in the soul; other sins fetch blood, these are a stab at the heart.

**Qu.** *How many ways doth a man sin against illuminations and convictions?*

*Ans.* 1. When he lives in the total neglect of duty. He is not ignorant that it is a duty to read the word, yet he lets the bible ly by as a rusty armour, that he seldom makes use of: he is convinced that it is a duty to pray in his family, yet he can go days and months, and God never hear of him: he calls God father, but never asks him blessing. Neglect of family-prayer doth, as it were, uncover the roof of mens houses, and make way for a curse to be rained down upon their table.

2. When a man lives in the same sins he condemns in others, Rom. ii. 1. *Thou that judgest another, dost the same thing.* As Austin saith of Seneca, *He wrote against superstitions, yet he worshipped those images which he reprov'd.* One man condemns another for rash censuring, yet



yet lives in the same sin himself; a master reprove his apprentice for swearing, yet he himself swears. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold: they who reprove and snuff the vices of others, had need themselves to be free from those sins. *The snuffers must be of gold.*

3. When a man sins after vows, *Pf. lvi. 12. Thy vows, O God, are upon me.* A vow is a religious promise made to God, to dedicate ourselves to him. A vow is not only a *purpose*, but a *promise*. Every votary makes himself a debtor, he binds himself to God in a solemn manner. Now to sin after a vow to vow himself to God, and give his soul to the devil, must needs be against the highest convictions.

4. When a man sins after *counsels, admonitions, warnings*, he cannot plead ignorance: the trumpet of the gospel hath been blown in his ears, and sounded a retreat to call him off from his sins; he hath been told of his injustice, living in malice, keeping bad company, yet he would venture upon sin: this is to sin against conviction; it aggravates the sin, and is like a weight put into the scale, to make his sin weigh the heavier. If a sea-mark be set up to give warning, that there are shelves and rocks in that place, yet, if the mariner will sail there, and split his ship, it is presumption; and, if he be cast away, who will pity him?

5. When a man sins against express *comminations and threatnings*. God hath thundered out threatnings against such sins, *Pf. lxvi. 21. God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.* Yet, tho' God set the point of his sword to the breast of a sinner, yet he will commit sin. The pleasure of sin doth more delight him, than the threatnings affright him: he, like the *leviathan*, laughs at the shaking of a spear, *Job xli. 29.* Nay, he derides God's threatnings, *Isa. x. 19. Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; we have heard much what God intends to do, and of judgment approaching, we would soon see it.* For men to see the flaming sword of God's threatnings brandished, yet to strengthen themselves in sin, is in an high manner to sin against illumination and conviction.

6. When a man sins under *affliction*. God doth not only thunder by threatening, but hath let his thunder-bolt fall; he hath inflicted judgments on a person; he may read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins. His sin was *uncleanneſs*; he hath wasted his strength, as well as his estate. He hath had a fit of apoplexy; yet,

tho' he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. This is to sin against conviction, 2 *Chron. xxviii. 22. In his distress did he trespass yet more; this is that king-Ahaz.* This doth enhance and make the sin greater than other sins: for sinning against an enlightened conscience: (1.) Is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness, men can give no reason, make no defence for their sins, yet they are resolved to hold fast iniquity. This is desperate wilfulness: and, *Voluntas est regula & mensura actionis*, the more of the will in a sin, the greater the sin, *Jer. xviii. 12. We will walk after our own devices.* Tho' there be death and hell every step, we will march on under Satan's colours. This made the sin of the apostate angels so great, because it was wilful; they had no ignorance in their mind, no passion to stir them up; there was no tempter to deceive them, but they sinned obstinately, and out of choice. (2.) To sin against convictions and illuminations, is joined with slighting and contempt of God. It is bad for a sinner to forget God, but it is worse to condemn him, *Prov. x. 13. Wherefore do the wicked condemn God?* An enlightened sinner knows, that by his sin he disobligeth and angers God; but he cares not whether God be pleased or no, he will have his sin: therefore such an one is said to reproach God, *Numb. xv. 30. The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord.* Every sin displeaseth God, but sins against an enlightened conscience reproach the Lord. To condemn the authority of a prince, is a reproach done to him. (3.) It is accompanied with impudency. Fear and shame are banished, the veil of modesty is laid aside, *Zeph. iii. 5. The unjust knoweth no shame.* Judas knew Christ was the Messiah; he was convinced of it by an oracle from heaven, and by the miracles he wrought, and yet he impudently goes on in his treason; nay, when Christ said, *He that dips his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me:* and Judas knew Christ meant him. And when Judas was going about his treason, Christ pronounced a *wo* to him, *Luke xxii. 22.* yet, for all that, he proceeded in his treason. Thus to sin presumptuously, against an enlightened conscience, dyes the sin of a crimson colour, and makes it greater than other sins.

2. Such sins are more heinous than others, which are sins of continuance. The continuing of sin is the enhancing of sin. He who plots treason, makes himself a greater offender. Some



mens heads are the devil's mint-house, they are minting of mischief, *Rom. i. 30. Inventers of evil things.* Some invent new oaths, others new shames; such were those presidents that invented a decree against *Daniel*, and got the king to sign it, *Dan. vi. 9.*

4. Those sins are greater, which proceed from a *spirit of malignity.* To malign holiness is diabolical. 'Tis a sin to want grace, 'tis worse to hate it. In nature there are antipathies, as between the vine and laurel. Some have an antipathy against God, because of his purity, *Isa. xxx. 11. Cause the holy One of Israel to cease from before us.* Sinners, if it lay in their power, would not only unthroned God, but unbe God; if they could help it, God should no longer be God. This sin is boiled up to a greater height.

5. Those sins are of a greater magnitude, which are mixed with ingratitude. God cannot endure, of all things, to have his kindness slighted. God's mercy is seen, in relieving men so long, in wooing them by his Spirit and ministers to be reconciled, in crowning them with so many temporal blessings: now, to abuse all this love, when God hath been filling up the measure of his mercy, that men should fill up the measure of their sins; this is high ingratitude, and doth make their sins of a deeper crimson. Some are worse for mercy. The vulture (saith *Aelian*) draws sickness from perfumes: So the sinner contracts evil from the sweet perfumes of God's mercy. The *English* chronicle reports of one *Parry*, who being condemned to die, queen *Elizabeth* sent him his pardon; and, after he was pardoned, he conspired and plotted the queen's death; just so some deal with God; he bestows mercy, and they plot treason against him, *Isa. i. 2. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* The *Athenians*, in lieu of the good service *Themistocles* had done them, banished him their city. The snake, in the fable, being frozen, stung him that gave him warmth. Certainly sins against mercy are far more heinous.

6. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed with delectation. A child of God may sin through a surprizal, or against his will, *Rom. vii. 19. The evil which I would not, that do I.* Like one that is carried down the stream involuntarily. But, to sin with delight, doth heighten and greaten the sin: a sign the heart is in the sin, *Hos. iv. 8. They set their*

*heart on their iniquity, as a man follows his gain with delight, Rev. xxii. 15. Without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. To tell a lie, is a sin; but to love to tell a lie, is a greater sin.*

7. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed under a pretence of religion. To cozen and defraud is a sin; but to do it with a Bible in one's hand, is a double sin; to be unchast, is a sin; but to put on a mask of religion to play the whore, makes the sin greater, *Prov. vii. 14. I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come let us take our fill of love.* She speaks as if she had been at church, and had been saying her prayers: who would ever have suspected her of dishonesty? But, behold her hypocrisy; she makes her devotion a preface to adultery, *Luke xx. 47. Who devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayers.* This sin was not in making long prayers; (for Christ was a whole night in prayer) but to make long prayers, that they might do unrighteous actions, did make their sin more horrid.

8. Sins of *apostacy* are more heinous than others. *Demas* forsook the truth, *2 Tim. iv. 10.* and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith *Dorotheus.* To fall, is sin; but to fall away, is a greater sin. Apostates cast a disgrace upon religion. The apostate (saith *Tertullian*) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and, having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master. In which respect, the apostate is said to put Christ to open shame, *Heb. vi. 6.* This dyes a sin in grain, and makes it greater. It is a sin not to profess Christ, but it is a greater to deny him: not to wear Christ's colours, is a sin; but to run from his colours, is a greater sin. A pagan sins less than a baptized renegade.

9. To persecute religion, makes sin greater, *Acts vii. 22.* To have no religion, is a sin; but to endeavour to destroy religion, is a greater. *Antiochus Epiphanes* took more tedious journeys and run more hazards, to vex and oppress the Jews, than all his predecessors had done in obtaining victories. *Herod* added this above all, that he put *John* in prison, *Luke iii. 20.* He sinned before by incest; but, by imprisoning the prophet, this added to his sin, and made it greater. Persecution fills up the measure of sin, *Mat. xxiii. 32. Fill you up the measure of your fathers.* If you pour in a porringer of water into



into a cistern, that adds something to it : but pour in a bucket-full or two, and that fills up the measure of the cistern : so persecution fills the measure of sin, and makes it greater.

10. To sin maliciously, makes sin greater. *Aquinas*, and other of the schoolmen, place the sin against the Holy Ghost in malice. The sinner doth all he can to vex God, and despite the Spirit of grace, *Heb. x. 29.* Thus *Julian*, who threw up his dagger in the air, as if he would be revenged upon God. This swells sin to its full bigness, it cannot be greater. When a man is once come to this, blasphemously to despite the Spirit, there is but one step lower he can fall, and that is to hell.

11. & ult. It aggravates sin, and makes it greater, when a man not only sins himself, but endeavours to make others sin. (1.) Such as teach errors to the people, who decry Christ's Deity, or deny his virtue, making him only a political head, not an head of influence ; who

preach against the morality of the sabbath, or the immortality of the soul ; these mens sins are greater than others. If the breakers of God's law sin, what do they that teach men to break them ? *Matth. v. 19.* (2.) Such as destroy others by their bad example. The swearing father hath taught his son to swear, and damned him by his example. These mens sins are greater than others, and they shall have an hotter place in hell.

*Use.* You see all sins are not equal ; some are more grievous than others, and bring greater wrath ; therefore especially take heed of these sins, *Pf. xix. 13. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.* The least sin is bad enough ; you need not aggravate your sins, and make them more heinous : he that hath a little wound will not make it deeper. Oh beware of those bloody circumstances which greaten your sin, and make it more heinous. The higher a man is in sinning, the lower he shall ly in torment.

## WHAT SIN DESERVETH.

Q<sup>U</sup>. WHAT doth every sin deserve ?

*Ans.* God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

*MATT. XXV. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,*

Man having sinned, is like a favourite turned out of the king's favour, and deserves the wrath and curse of God.

I. God's curse, *Gal. iii. 10.* As when Christ cursed the fig-tree, it withered, *Matth. xxi. 19.* So, when God curseth any, he withers in his soul. God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

II. God's wrath, which is nothing else but the execution of God's curse.

*First,* What this wrath is. In this wrath there is, (1.) Something that is privative ; that is, the being deprived of the smiles of God's face. It is hell enough to be excluded God's presence : *In whose presence is fulness of joy,* *Pf. xvi. 11.* God's smiling face hath that splendor and orieny of beauty shining in it, as ravisheth the angels with delight : this is the diamond in the ring of glory. And, if it were such a misery for *Abfalem*, that he might not

see the king's face, *2 Kings xiv. 22.* what will it be for the wicked to be shut out from beholding God's pleasant face ! *Privatio divinae visionis omnium suppliciorum summum.*

(2.) God's wrath hath something in it positive : that is, his frown and enraged fury ; which is, *Wrath come upon the sinner to the uttermost,* *1 Theff. ii. 16.* Here three positions or maxims ;

1. God's wrath is irresistible, *Pf. xc. 11. Who knows the power of thy anger ?* Sinners may oppose God's ways, but not his wrath. Shall the briars contend with the fire ? shall finite contend with Infinite ? *Job xl. 9. Hast thou an arm like God ?*

2. God's wrath is terrible. The *Spanish* proverb is, *The lion is not so fierce as he is painted.* We are apt to have slight thoughts of God's wrath ; but it is very tremendous and dismal, as if scalding lead should be dropt in one's eye. The *Hebrew* word for wrath, signifies heat. To show that the wrath of God is hot, therefore it is compared to fire in the text : fire, when it is in its rage, is dreadful (as we saw in the flames of this city.) So the wrath of God is like fire, it is the terrible of terribles. Other fire.



fire is but painted to this: if, when God's wrath is kindled but a *little*, and a spark of it flies into a wicked man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible; what will it be when God *stirs up all his wrath*? Ps. lxxviii. 38. How sad is it with a soul in *desertion*! Now God dips his pen in gall, and writes bitter things: now his poisoned arrow sticks fast in the heart, Ps. lxxxviii. 15, 16. *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted, thy fierce wrath goeth over me.* Luther, in *desertion*, was in such horror of mind, that, *Nec calor, nec sanguis, superesset*; he had no blood seen in his face, but he lay as one dead. Now, if God's wrath be such towards them whom he loves, what will it be towards them whom he hates? If they who sip of the cup find it so bitter, what will they do who drink the dregs of the cup? Ps. lxxv. 8. Solomon saith, *The wrath of a prince is as the roaring of a lion*, Prov. xix. 12. What then is God's wrath? when God musters up all his forces, and sets himself in *battalia* against a sinner, how can his heart endure? Ezek. xxii. 14. *Who is able to lie under mountains of wrath*? God is the sweetest friend, but the sorest enemy. To set forth the fearfulness of this wrath.

(1.) The wrath of God shall seize upon every part of a sinner: 1. Upon the *body*: the body, which was so tender, it could not bear heat or cold, shall be tormented in the wine-press of God's wrath; those eyes, which before could only behold amorous objects, shall be tormented with the sight of devils; the ears, which before were delighted with music, shall be tormented with the hideous shrieks of the damned. 2. The wrath of God shall seize upon the soul of a reprobate. Ordinary fire cannot touch the soul; when the martyr's bodies were consuming, their souls did triumph in the flames; but God's wrath burns the soul. 1. The *memory* shall be tormented to remember what means of grace have been abused. 2. The *conscience* shall be tormented with self-accusations: the sinner shall accuse himself for presumptuous sins, for mispending his precious hours, for resisting the Holy Ghost.

(2.) The wrath of God is without *intermission*. Hell is an abiding place, but no resting-place; there's not a minute's rest. Outward pain hath some abatement; if it be the stone or cholic, the patient hath sometimes ease: but the torments of the damned have no *intermission*; he that feels God's wrath, never saith,

*I have ease.*

(3.) The wrath of God is *eternal*. So saith the text, *Everlasting fire*. No tears can quench the flame of God's anger; no though we could shed rivers of tears. In all pains of this life, men hope for a cessation, the sufferings will not continue long; either the tormentor dies, or the tormented; but the wrath of God is *always feeding* upon a sinner. The terror of natural fire is, that it consumes what it burns; but this makes the fire of God's wrath terrible, that it doth not consume what it burns. *Sic morientur damnati ut semper vivant*, Bern. The sinner shall ever be in the furnace; after innumerable millions of years the wrath of God is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousand years a bird should come and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long while ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; but if after all that time the damned might come out of hell, there were some hope: but this word *ever* breaks the heart.

Qu. But how doth it seem to consist with God's justice to punish sin (which perhaps was committed in a moment) with eternal fire?

Ans. In respect of the *heinous nature of sin*. Consider the *Person offended*; 'tis *crimen læsæ majestatis*: sin is committed against an infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and so the punishment must be infinite. Now, because the nature of man is but finite, and a sinner cannot at once bear infinite wrath, therefore he must in eternity of time be satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once.

(4.) While the wicked lie scorching in the flames of wrath, they have *none to commiserate them*. It is some ease of grief to have some condole with us; but the wicked have *wrath* and no *pity* shown them. Who should pity them? God will not pity them: they derided his Spirit, and now he will laugh at their *calamity*, Prov. i. 26. The saints will not pity them: they persecuted the saints upon earth, therefore they will rejoice to see God's justice executed on them, Ps. lviii. 10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance*.

(5.) The sinner under wrath hath none to speak a good word for him. An elect person, when he sins, hath one to intercede for him, 1 John ii. 1. *We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous*. Christ will say, It is one of my friends,

friends, one whom I have shed my blood for; Father, pardon him. But the wicked (that die in sin) have none to solicit for them; they have an *accuser*, but no advocate: Christ's blood will not plead for them; they slighted Christ, and refused to come under his government, therefore Christ's blood cries against them.

3. God's wrath is just. The *Greek* word for *vengeance*, signifies *justice*. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not one drop of injustice. 'Tis just that God's honour be repaired, and how can that be but by punishing offenders? Having shown you what this wrath of God is, I shall shew you, 2. That we have deserved the curse and wrath of God: he who infringeth the king's laws, deserves the penalty. Mercy goes by favour, punishment by desert. *Mat. ix. 8. To us belongeth confusion of face.* Wrath is that which belongeth to us as we are sinners; it is as due to us, as any wages that are paid.

*Use I.* Of information. *1st. Branch.* It justifies God in condemning sinners at the last day. Sinners deserve wrath, and it is no injustice to give them that which they deserve. If a malefactor deserves death, the judge doth him no wrong in condemning him.

*2d. Branch.* See what a great evil sin is, which exposeth a person to God's wrath for ever. You may know the lion by his paw: and you may know what an evil thing sin is, by the wrath and curse it brings. When you see a man drawn upon an hurdle to execution, you conclude he is guilty of some capital crime that brings such a punishment: when a man lies under the torrid zone of God's wrath, and roars out in flames; then say, How horrid an evil sin is! They who now see no evil in swearing, or sabbath-breaking, they will see it look black in the glass of hell-torments.

*3d. Branch.* See here an hand-writing upon the wall; here is that which may check a sinner's mirth. He is now brisk and frolick, *he chants to the sound of the viol, and invents instruments of music*, *Amos vi. 5.* He drinks *stollen waters*, and saith, *they are sweet*. Oh! but let him remember that the wrath and curse of God hang over him, which will shortly (without repentance) be executed on him. *Dionysius* thought, as he sat at table, he saw a naked sword hang over his head: the sword of God's justice hangs over a sinner; and when the slender thread of life is cut asunder, the sword falls upon him. *Rejoyce, O young man,*

*in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth*, *Eccl. xi. 9.* But know thou, *for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.* For a drop of pleasure, thou must drink a sea of wrath. Your pleasure cannot be so sweet, as wrath is bitter: the delights of the flesh cannot countervail the horror of conscience: better want the devil's honey, than be so stung with the wrath of God. The garden of *Eden*, which signifies *pleasure*, had a flaming sword placed at the east-end of it, *Gen. iii. 24.* The garden of carnal and sinful delight is surrounded with the flaming sword of God's wrath.

*Use II. Reproof.* It reproves the stupidity of sinners, who are no more affected with the curse and wrath of God which is due to them, *Isa. xlv. 19. No man considereth in his heart.* If they were in debt, and were ready to have the serjeant arrest them, they would be affected with that: but tho' the fierce wrath of God is ready to arrest them, they remember not. A beast, though he hath no shame, yet he hath fear; he is afraid of fire: but sinners are worse than brutish, they fear not the fire of hell, till they are in it. Most have their conscience asleep, or seared; but when they shall see the vials of God's wrath dropping, then they will cry out, as *Dives, O I am tormented in this flame!* *Luke xvi. 24.*

*Use III. Exhort. 1.* Let us adore God's patience, who hath not brought this wrath and curse upon us all this while. We have deserved wrath, yet God hath not given us our desert. We may all subscribe to that, *Pf. ciii. 8. The Lord is slow to anger*: and *v. 10. He hath not rewarded us according to our iniquities.* God hath deferred his wrath, and given us space to repent, *Rev. ii. 21.* God is not like an hasty creditor, that requires the debt, and gives no time for the payment: he shoots off his warning-piece, that he may not shoot off his murdering-piece, *2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.* God adjourns the assizes, to see if sinners would turn; he keeps off the storm of his wrath: but if men will not be warned, let them know, that long-forbearance is no forgiveness.

*2d. Branch.* Let us labour to prevent the wrath we have deserved. How careful are men to prevent poverty or disgrace! Oh labour to prevent God's eternal wrath, that it may not only be deferred, but removed.



*Q. What shall we do to prevent and escape wrath to come?*

*Ans.* 1. By getting an interest in Jesus Christ. Christ is the only screen to stand betwixt us and the wrath of God: he did feel God's wrath, that they who believe in him should never feel it, 1 *Thess.* i. 10. *Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.* Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of God's wrath, and that furnace did not singe the garments of the three children, nor was the smell of fire upon them, *Dan.* iii. 27. Jesus Christ went into the furnace of his Father's wrath; and those that believe in him, the smell of the fire of hell shall never pass upon them.

2. If we would prevent the wrath of God, let us take heed of those sins which will bring the wrath of God. *Edmund*, successor of *Anselm*, hath a saying, *I had rather leap into a furnace of fire, than willingly commit a sin against God.* There are several fiery sins we must take heed of, which will bring the fire of God's wrath.

(1.) The fire of *rash anger*. Some who profess religion, yet cannot bridle their tongue; they care not what they say in their anger, they will curse their passions. *St. James* saith, *The tongue is set on fire of hell*, chap. iii. 6. O take heed of a *fiery tongue*, lest it bring thee to *fiery torment*. *Dives* begged a drop of water to cool his tongue: *St. Cyprian* saith, He had offended most in his tongue, and now that was most set on fire.

2. Take heed of the fire of *malice*. Malice is a malignant humour, whereby we wish evil to one another; it is a vermin lives on blood, it studies revenge. *Caligula* had a chest where he kept deadly poisons for them he had malice against. The fire of malice brings men to the

fiery furnace of God's wrath.

3. Take heed of the sin of uncleanness, *Heb.* xiii. 4. *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Such as burn in uncleanness, are in great danger to burn one day in hell. Let one fire put out another; let the fire of God's wrath put out the fire of lust.

3d. *Branch.* To you who have a well-grounded hope, that you shall not feel this wrath, which you have deserved; let me exhort you, 1. To be very thankful to God, who hath given his Son to save you from this tremendous wrath. *Jesus hath delivered you from wrath to come.* The Lamb of God was scorched in the fire of God's wrath for you: Christ did feel the wrath which he did not deserve, that you may escape the wrath which you have deserved. *Pliny* observes, that there is nothing better to quench fire than blood: Christ's blood hath quenched the fire of God's wrath for you. *Upon me, upon me be the curse*, said *Rebekah* to *Jacob*, *Gen.* xxvii. 13. So said Christ to God's justice, *Upon me be the curse, that my elect may inherit the blessing.* 2. Be patient under all the afflictions which you endure. Affliction is sharp, but this is not wrath, this is not hell. Who would not willingly drink in the cup of affliction, that knows he shall never drink in the cup of damnation? who would not be willing to bear the wrath of men, that knows he shall never feel the wrath of God?

Christian, tho' thou mayest feel the rod, thou shalt never feel the bloody ax. *Austin* once said, *Strike, Lord, where thou wilt, if sin be pardoned.* So say, Afflict me, Lord, as thou wilt in this life, seeing I shall escape wrath to come.

## O F F A I T H.

**Q. WHAT** doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

*Ans.* Faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means, whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

I begin with the first, *Faith in Jesus Christ*, *Rom.* iii. 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a*

*propitiation through faith in his blood.* The great privilege in the text is, to have Christ for a propitiation; which is not only to free us from God's wrath, but to ingratiate us into God's love and favour. And the means of having Christ to be our propitiation is, *Faith in his blood.* There is a twofold faith, *Fides quæ creditur*, (i. e.) *The doctrine of faith*; and *Fides quæ creditur*, (i. e.) *the Grace of faith.* The act of justifying faith lies in recumbency: we do

do rest on Christ alone for salvation. As a man that is ready to drown catcheth hold on the bough of a tree: so a poor trembling sinner, seeing himself ready to perish, catcheth hold by faith on Christ the tree of life, and so is saved. The work of faith is by the holy Spirit; therefore faith is called the *fruit of the spirit*, Gal. v. 22. Faith doth not grow in nature, it is an outlandish plant, a fruit of the *spirit*. This grace of faith is *sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum*; of all others, the most *precious rich* faith, and most holy faith, and *faith of God's elect*: hence it is called *precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1. As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith is the queen of the graces; faith is the *condition* of the gospel; *Thy faith hath saved thee*, Luke vii. 50. Not thy tears. Faith is the *vital artery of the soul*, it animates it, Hab. ii. 4. *The just shall live by faith*. Unbelievers, though they breathe, yet want life. Faith is (as Clemens Alexandrinus calls it) a *mother-grace*; it excites and invigorates all the graces: not a grace stirs till faith sets it a-work. Faith sets repentance a-work; it is like fire to the still; faith sets hope a-work; first we believe the promise, then we hope for it: did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die: faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. *Faith which worketh by love*. Who can believe in the infinite merits of Christ, and his heart not ascend in a *fiery chariot* of love? Faith is a *catholicon*, or remedy against all troubles, a sheat-anchor we cast out into the sea of God's mercy, and are kept from sinking in despair. Other graces have done worthily; thou, O Faith, excellest them all. Indeed in heaven love will be the *chief* grace; but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth. 1 John ix. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*. Faith carries away the garland from all the other graces: other graces help to sanctify us, but it is faith only that hath the honour to justify, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith*.

Qu. But how comes faith to be so precious?

Ans. Not as it is a more holy quality, or as if it had more worthiness than other graces, but *respectu objecti*, as it lays hold on Christ the blessed object, and fetcheth in his fulness, John ix. 16. Faith in itself consider'd, is but *manus mendica*, the beggar's hand: but as this hand

receives the rich alms of Christ's merits, so it is precious, and doth challenge a superiority over the rest of the graces.

Use I. Branch 1<sup>st</sup>. Of all sins beware of the rock of unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. *Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief*. Men think, as long as they are not drunkards or swearers, it is no great matter to be unbelievers. This is the gospel-sin, it dyes your other sins in grain.

1. Unbelief is a *Christ-reproaching* sin. Unbelief disparageth Christ's infinite merit, as if it could not save: unbelief makes the wound of sin to be broader than the plaister of Christ's blood. This is an high contempt offered to Christ, and is a deeper spear than that which the Jews thrust into his side.

2. Unbelief is an *ungrateful* sin. *Ingratus vitandus est ut dirum scelus, tellus ipsa foedius nihil creat*. Ingratitude is the prodigy of wickedness: unbelief is ungrateful, being against the richest mercy. Suppose a king should redeem a captive, and to redeem him should part with his crown of gold from his head; and when he had done this, should say to the man redeemed, *all I desire of thee in lieu of my kindness, is, to believe that I love thee*: now, if he should say, *No, I do not believe any such thing; or, that thou carest not at all for me*: I appeal to you, were not this odious ingratitude? So is the case here; God hath sent his Son to shed his blood: now God requires only to believe in him; that he is able and willing to save us: No, faith unbelief, his blood was not shed for me, I cannot persuade myself that Christ hath any purpose of love to me: is not this horrid ingratitude? And this enhanseth a sin, and makes it of a crimson-colour.

3. Unbelief is a *leading* sin. It is the breeder of sin. *Qualitas malae vitae initium sumit ab infidelitate*. Unbelief is a root-sin, and the devil labours to water this root, that the branches may be fruitful. (1.) Unbelief breeds *hardness* of heart; therefore they are put together, Mark vi. 14. Christ upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. Unbelief breeds the stone in the heart: he who believes not in Christ, is not affected with his sufferings, he melts not in tears of love. Unbelief freezeth the heart: first it defiles and then it hardens. (2.) Unbelief breeds *profaneness*: an unbeliever will stick at no sin; neither at false weights, nor false oaths. He will swallow down treason; Judas was first an unbeliever, and then a traitor, John



vi. 64. He who hath no faith in his heart, will have no fear of God before his eyes.

4. Unbelief is a wrath-procuring sin; it is *inimica salutis*, Bern. *John* iii. 18. *Iam condemnatus est*, dying so, he is as sure to be condemned as if already, *John* iii. 36. *He that believeth not on the Son of God, the wrath of God abideth on him*. He who believes not in the blood of the Lamb, must feel the wrath of the Lamb. The *Gentiles* that believe not in Christ, will be as well damned as the *Jews* who blaspheme him. And if unbelief be so fearful and damnable a sin, shall we not be afraid to live in it?

2d. *Branch*. Above all graces, set faith a-work on Christ, *John* iii. 15. *That whosoever believeth on him should not perish*. *Eph*. vi. 16. *Above all, taking the shield of faith*. Say as queen *Ester*, *I will go in into the king; and if I perish, I perish*. She had nothing to encourage her, she ventured against law, yet the golden sceptre was held forth to her. We have promises to encourage our faith, *John* vi. 37. *He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*. Let us then advance faith by an holy recumbency on Christ's merits. Christ's blood will not justify without believing: they are both put together in the text, *Faith in his blood*. The blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. Christ's sufferings are the plaister to heal a sin-sick soul, but this plaister must be applied by faith. It is not money in a rich man's hand, though offered to us, will enrich us, unless we receive it. So it is not Christ's virtues or benefits will do us good, unless we receive them by the hand of faith. Above all graces, set faith on work; remember this grace is most acceptable to God, and that upon many accounts.

(1.) Because it is a *God-exalting* grace: it glorifies God, *Rom*. iv. 20. *Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God*. To believe that there is more mercy in God, and merit in Christ, than sin in us, and that Christ hath answered all the demands and challenges of the law, and that his blood hath fully satisfied for us; this is an high degree to honour God. Faith in the mediator brings more glory to God, than martyrdom or the most heroic act of obedience.

(2.) Faith in Christ is so acceptable to God, because it is such a *self-denying* grace; it makes a man go out of himself, renounce all self-righteousness, and wholly rely on Christ for justification. Faith is very humble, it confesseth

its own indigence, and lives wholly upon Christ. As the bee sucks sweetness from the flower, so faith sucks all its strength and comfort from Christ.

(3.) Faith is a grace so acceptable to God, because by faith we present a righteousness to God which doth best please him: we bring the righteousness of Christ into the court, which is called the righteousness of God, *2 Cor*. v. 21. To bring Christ's righteousness, is to bring *Benjamin* with us. A believer may say, Lord, it is not the righteousness of *Adam*, or of the Angels, but of Christ who is God-man, that I bring before thee. The Lord cannot choose but smell a sweet savour in Christ's righteousness.

*Use II. Trial*. Let us try our faith; there is something that looks like faith, and is not. *Pliny* faith, there is a *Cyprian* stone, which is in colour, like a diamond, but it is not of the right kind: there is a false spurious faith in the world. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the Herbalist can distinguish them by the root and taste; something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished several ways.

(1.) *Trial*. True faith is grounded upon knowledge: knowledge carries the torch before faith. There is a knowledge of Christ's orient excellencies, *Phil*. iii. 8. He is all made up of love and beauty. True faith is a judicious intelligent grace, it knows *whom* it believes, and *why* it believes. Faith is seated as well in the understanding as the will: it hath an eye to see Christ, as well as a wing to fly to him. Such therefore as are invailed with ignorance, or have only an implicate faith, to believe as the Church believes, have no true genuine faith.

(2.) Faith lives in a broken heart, *Mark* ix. 24. *He cried out with tears, Lord, I believe*. True faith is always in an heart bruised for sin: such therefore, whose hearts were never touched for sin, have no faith. If a physician should tell us, there were an herb would help us against all infections, but it always grows in a watery place: if we should see a herb like it in colour, leaf, smell, blossom, but it grows upon a rock, we would conclude this were the wrong herb. So saving faith doth always grow in an heart humbled for sin; it grows in a weeping eye, watery conscience: therefore, if there be a shew of faith, but it grows upon a rock, an hard impenitent heart, this is not the true faith.

(3.) True faith is at first nothing, but an *Embryo*,

*Embryo*, it is minute and small; it is full of doublings, temptations, fears: it begins in weakness. It is like the smoking flax, *Mat. xii. 20.* It smokes with desires, but doth not flame with comfort; it is at first so small, that it is scarce discernable. Such as at the first dash have a strong persuasion that Christ is theirs, who leap out of sin into assurance, their faith is false and spurious: that faith, which is come to its full stature on its birth-day, is a monster. The seed that sprang up suddenly withered, *Mat. xiii. 3.*

(4.) Faith is a refining grace, it consecrates and purifies. Moral virtue may wash the outside, Faith washeth the inside, *Acts xv. 9. Having purified their hearts by faith*, Faith makes the heart a sacrary or temple with this inscription, *holiness to the Lord*, such, whose hearts have legions of lust, in them, were never acquainted with the true faith. For one to say, he hath faith, yet lives in sin; is, as if one should say, he were in health, yet his vitals are perished. Faith is a virgin-grace, it is joined with sanctity, *1 Tim. iii. 9. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.* The jewel of faith is always put in the cabinet of a pure conscience. The woman that touched Christ by faith, fetched an healing and cleansing virtue from him.

(5.) True faith is obediential, *Rom. xvi. 26. The obedience of faith.* Faith melts our will into the will of God. If God commands duty (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys, *Heb. xi. 8. By faith Abraham obeyed.* Faith doth not only believe the promise, but obey the command. It is not having a speculative knowledge will evidence you to be believers: the devil hath knowledge; but that which makes him a devil is, he wants obedience.

(6.) True faith is encreasing, *Rom. i. 17. From faith to faith, i. e.* From one degree of faith to another. Faith doth not lie in the heart, as a stone in the earth; but, as seed in the earth, it grows. *Joseph of Arimathea* was a disciple of Christ, but afraid to confess him; afterwards he went boldly to *Pilate* and begged the body of Jesus. *John xix. 36.* And a Christian's increase in faith is known two ways:

1. By *steadfastness*: he is a pillar in the temple of God, *Col. ii. 7. Rooted and built up in him; and stablished in the faith.* Unbelievers are scepticks in religion, they are unsettled; they question every truth: but, when faith is on

the increasing hand, it doth *stabilire animum*, it doth corroborate a Christian; he is able to prove his principles; he holds no more than he will die for: as that martyr-woman said, *I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can burn for him.* An increasing faith is not like a ship in the midst of the sea, that fluctuates, and is tossed upon the waves; but like a ship at anchor, which is firm and steadfast.

2. A Christian's increase in faith is known by *strength*: he can do that now, which he could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he was not able to do when he was a child; he can carry an heavier burden; so a Christian can bear crosses with more patience.

Obj. *But I fear I have no faith, it is so weak?*

Ans. If you have faith, though but in its infancy, be not discouraged: For, (1.) A little faith is faith, as a spark of fire is fire. (2.) A weak faith may lay hold on a strong Christ; a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong. She, in the gospel, who but touched Christ, fetched virtue from him. (3.) The promises are not made to strong faith, but, to true. The promise doth not say, he who hath a giant faith, who can believe God's love through a frown, who can rejoice in affliction, who can work wonders, remove mountains, stop the mouth of lions, shall be saved; but, whosoever believes, be his faith never so small. A reed is but weak, especially when it is bruised; yet the promise is made to it. *Mat. xii. 20. A bruised reed will he not break.* (4.) A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most. The vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. The thief's cross, which was newly converted, was but weak in grace; but how many precious clusters grew upon that tender plant! *Luke xxiii. 40.* he chides his fellow-thief, *Dost thou not fear God?* He judgeth himself, *We indeed suffer justly.* He believes in Christ, when he said, *Lord.* He makes a heavenly prayer. *Remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith! (5.) The weakest believer is a member of Christ, as well as the strongest; and the weakest member of the body mystical shall not perish. Christ will cut off rotten members, but not weak members. Therefore, Christian, be not discouraged: God, who would have us receive them that are weak



in faith, *Rom. xiv. 1.* will not himself refuse them.

II. The second means whereby we escape

the curse and wrath due to sin, is by repentance.

## OF REPENTANCE.

*ACTS xi. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.*

**R**EPENTANCE seems to be a bitter pill to take, but it is to purge out the bad humour of sin. Repentance is, by some *Antinomian* spirits, cried down as a legal doctrine; but Christ himself preached it, *Matth. iv. 17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent, &c.* And, in his last farewell, when he was ascending to heaven, he commanded that *Repentance should be preached in his name, Luke xxiv. 37.* Repentance is a pure Gospel grace. The covenant of works would not admit of repentance; it cursed all that could not perform perfect and personal obedience, *Gal. iii. 10.* Repentance comes in by the Gospel; it is the fruit of Christ's purchase, that repenting sinners shall be saved. Repentance is wrought by the ministry of the Gospel, while it sets before our eyes Christ crucified. Repentance is not arbitrary, but necessary; there is no being saved without it, *Luke xiii. 3. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* And we may be thankful to God, that he hath left us this plank after shipwreck.

(1.) I shall show the counterfeits of repentance.

1. *Natural softness* and tenderness of spirit. Some have a tender affection, arising from their complexion, whereby they are apt to weep and relent when they see any object of pity. These are not repenting tears: for many weep to see another's misery, who cannot weep at their own sin.

2. Counterfeit, *Legal affrightments.* A man hath lived in a course of sin; at last he is made a little sensible, he sees hell ready to devour him, and he is filled with anguish and horror; but, within a while, the tempest of conscience is blown over, and he is quiet: then he concludes he is a true penitent, because he hath felt some bitterness in sin: *this is not repentance.* Judas had some trouble of mind. If anguish and trouble were sufficient to repent-

ance, then the damned should be most penitent, for they are most in anguish of mind. There may be trouble of mind, where there is no grieving for the offence against God.

3. Counterfeit, a *slight superficial sorrow.* When God's hand lyes heavy upon a man (he is sick or lame) he may vent a sigh or tear, and say, *Lord, have mercy*; yet this is no true repentance. Ahab did more than all this, *1 Kings xxi. 27. He rent his clothes, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.* His clothes were rent, but not his heart. The eye may be watery, and the heart flinty. An apricock may be soft without, but it hath an hard stone within.

4. Counterfeit, *Good motions arising in the heart.* Every good motion is not repentance. Some think, if they have motions in their hearts to break off their sins, and become religious, this is repentance. As the devil may stir up bad motions in the godly, so the spirit of God may stir up good motions in the wicked. Herod had many good thoughts and inclinations stirred up in him by *John Baptist's* preaching, yet he did not truly repent, for he still lived in incest.

5. Counterfeit, *vows and resolutions.* What vows and solemn protestations do some make in their sickness, if God recover them, they will be new men, but afterwards are as bad as ever! *Jer. ii. 20. Thou saidst, I will not transgress*; here was a resolution: but for all this, he ran after her idols; *Under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.*

6. Counterfeit, *Leaving off some gross sin.* But that is a mistake: for, (1.) A man may leave some sins, and keep other. Herod did reform many things amiss, but kept his *Herodias*. (2.) An old sin may be left, to entertain a new. A man may leave off riot and prodigality, and turn covetous: this is to exchange a sin. These are the counterfeits of repentance.

Now,

Now, if you find that yours is a counterfeit repentance, and you have not repented aright, mend what you have done amiss: as in the body, if a bone be set wrong, the chirurgeon hath no ways but to break it again, and set it right: so must you do by your repentance; if you have not repented aright, you must have your heart broken again in a godly manner, and be more deeply afflicted for sin than ever. And that brings me to the second, to show wherein true repentance consists, in two things;

1st. *Humiliation*; Lev. xxvi. 41. *If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled.* There is (as the schoolmen) a twofold humiliation, or breaking of the heart. 1. *Attrition*; as when a rock is broken in pieces. This is done by the law, which is an hammer to break the heart. 2. *Contrition*; as when ice is melted into water. This is done by the Gospel, which is as a fire to melt the heart, Jer. xxiii. 9. It is the *sense of abused kindness causeth contrition.*

2dly. *Transformation, or change*, Rom. xii. 2. *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Repentance works a change in the whole man: as wine put into a glass where water is, the wine runs into every part of the water, and changeth its colour and taste: so true repentance doth not rest in one part, but diffuse and spread itself into every part.

1. Repentance causeth a change in the mind. Whereas, before a man did like well of sin, and say in defence of it, as *Jonah, I did well to be angry*, chap. ii. 9. So, I did well to swear, and break the sabbath. When once a man becomes a penitent, his judgment is changed, he now looks upon sin as the greatest evil. The Greek word for repentance, signifies *after-wisdom*; when, having seen how deformed and damnable a thing sin is, we change our mind. *Paul*, before conversion, verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, *Acts* xxvi. 9. But, when he became a penitent, now he was of another mind, *Phil.* iii. 8. *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.* Repentance causeth a change of judgment.

2. Repentance causeth a change in the affections, which move under the will as the commander in chief. *Repentance doth metamorphose the affections.* It turns rejoicing in sin into sorrow for sin: it turns boldness in sin into holy shame: it turns the love of sin into hatred. As *Amnon hated Tamar more than ever he loved her*, 2 Sam. xiii. 15. So the true

penitent hateth sin more than ever he loved it, *Psa.* cxix. 104. *I hate every false way.*

3. Repentance works a change in the life. Tho' repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but goes into the life. I say, it begins at the heart, *Jer.* iv. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart.* If the spring be corrupt, there can no pure stream run from it. But, tho' repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but changeth the life. What a change did repentance make in *Paul*! it changed a persecutor into a preacher. What a change did it make in the *Jaylor*? *Acts* xvi. 33. He took the apostles, and washed their stripes, and set meat before them. What a change did it make in *Mary Magdalene*? She that before did kiss her lovers with wanton embraces, now kisseth Christ's feet; she that did use to curl her hair, and dress it with costly jewels, now she makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet; her eyes that used to sparkle with lust, and with impure glances to entice her lovers, now she makes them a fountain of tears to wash her Saviour's feet; her tongue, that used to speak vainly and loosely, now it is an instrument set in tune to praise God. And this change of life hath two things in it;

(1.) The *terminus a quo*, a breaking off sin, *Dan.* iv. 27. *Break off thy sins by righteousness.* And this breaking off sin must have three qualifications; 1. It must be universal, a breaking off all sin. One disease may kill as well as more. The real penitent breaks off secret, gainful, complexion sins: he takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through the heart of his dearest lusts. 2. Breaking off sin must be *sincere*; it must not be out of fear or design, but upon spiritual grounds: as, 1st. From *antipathy* and *disgust*.

2dly. From a *principle of love* to God. If sin had not such evil effects, yet a true penitent would forsake it out of love to God. The best way to separate things that are frozen, is by fire. When sin and the heart are frozen together, the best way to separate them is the fire of love. Shall I sin against a gracious Father, and abuse that love which pardons me? 3dly. The breaking off sin must be *perpetual*, so as never to have to do with sin any more, *Hos.* xiv. 8. *What have I to do any more with idols?* Repentance is a spiritual divorce, which must be till death.

(2.) Change of life hath in it *terminus ad quem*, a returning unto the Lord: it is called *repentance*



*repentance towards God*, Acts xx. 21. 'Tis not enough, when we repent, to leave old sins; but we must engage in God's service: as when the wind leaves the west, it turns into a contrary corner. The repenting prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father, *Luke xxv. 18*. In true repentance the heart points directly to God, as the needle to the North pole.

*Use.* Let us all set upon the great work of repentance; let us repent sincerely and speedily: let us repent of all our sins, our pride, rash anger, unbelief. *Without repentance no remission*; it is not consistent with the holiness of God's nature, to pardon a sinner while he is in the act of rebellion. O meet God; not with weapons, but tears in your eyes. And, to stir you up to a melting, penitent frame;

1. Consider, what is there in sin, *that you should continue* in the practice of it? It is the *accursed thing*, Josh. vii. 11. It is the spirits of mischief distilled. (1.) It defiles the soul's glory; it is like a stain to beauty: 'tis compared to a *plague-sore*, 1 Kings viii. 38. Nothing so changeth one's glory into shame, as sin. (2.) Without repentance, sin tends to *final damnation*. *Peccatum transit actu manet reatu*.----Sin at first shews its colour in the glass, but afterwards it bites like a serpent. Those locusts, Rev. ix. 7. were an emblem of sin; *On their heads were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and there were stings in their tails*. Sin unrepented of ends in a tragedy. Sin hath the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death for its wages, Rom. vi. 23. What is there in sin then, that men should continue in it? Say not, it is sweet: who would desire that pleasure which kills?

2. Repentance is very pleasing to God; no sacrifice like a *broken heart*, Pl. li. 17. *A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*. St. Austin caused this sentence to be written over his bed when he was sick. *When the widow brought empty vessels to Elisha, the oil was poured into them*, 2 Kings iv. 6. *Bring God the broken vessel of a contrite heart, and he will pour in the oil of mercy*. Repenting tears are the joy of God and angels, *Luke xv*. Doves delight to be about the waters; and surely God's Spirit (who once descended in the likeness of a dove) takes great delight in the waters of repentance. *Mary stood at Jesus*

*feet weeping*, *Luke vi. 38*. She brought two things to Christ, *tears and ointment*; her tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment.

3. Repentance ushers in pardon; therefore they are joined together, *Acts v. 31*. *Repentance and remission*. Pardon of sin is the richest blessing; it is enough to make a sick man well, *Isa. xxxiii. 24*. *The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*. Pardon settles upon us the rich charter of the promises. Pardon-ing mercy is the sauce that makes all other mercies relish the sweeter; it sweetens our health, riches, honour. *David* had a crown of pure gold set upon his head, *Pf. xxi. 3*. But that which *David* did most bless God for, was not that God had set a crown of gold upon his head, but that God set a crown of mercy upon his head, *Pf. ciii. 4*. *Who crowneth thee with mercies*. But what was this crown of mercy? you may see, *ver. 3*. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities*. *David* more rejoiced that he was crowned with forgiveness, than that he wore a crown of pure gold. Now, what is it makes way for pardon of sin, but repentance? When *David's* soul was humbled and broken, then the prophet *Nathan* brought him that good news, 2 Sam. xii. 13. *The Lord hath put away thy sin*.

Obj. But sure, my sins are so great, that, if I should repent, God would not pardon them.

Ans. God will not go from his promise, *Jer. iii. 12*. *Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful*. If thy sins are as rocks, yet, upon thy repentance, the sea of God's mercy can drown these rocks, *Isa. i. 16*. *Wash ye, make ye clean*. Wash in the laver of repentance. *Ver. 18*. *Come now, and let us reason, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*. *Manna* was a crimson sinner; but, when he humbled himself greatly, the golden sceptre of mercy was held forth; when his head was a fountain to weep for sin, Christ's sides were a fountain to wash away sin. 'Tis not the greatness of sin, but impenitency, destroys. The Jews, some of them, that had an hand in crucifying Christ, upon their repentance, the blood they shed was a sovereign balm to heal them. When the prodigal came home to his father, he had the robe and the ring put upon him, and

and his father kissed him, Luke xix. If you break off your sins, God will become a friend to you: all that is in God shall be yours; his power shall be yours, to help you; his wisdom shall be yours, to counsel you; his spirit shall be yours, to sanctify you; his promises shall be yours, to comfort you; his angels shall be yours, to guard you; his mercy shall be yours, to save you.

4. There's much sweetness in repenting tears. The soul is never more enlarged and inwardly delighted, than when it can melt kindly for sin. Weeping days are festival-days. The Hebrew word to *repent*, *Nicham*, signifies *consolari, to take comfort*, John xvi. 21. *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. Christ turns the water of tears into wine. *David*, who was the great mourner in *Israel*, was the sweet singer: and the joy a true penitent finds, is a prelibation and foretaste of the joy of paradise. The wicked man's joy turns to sadness; the penitent's sadness turns to joy. Though repentance seems at first to be thorny and bitter, yet of this thorn a Christian gathers grapes. All which considerations may open a vein of godly sorrow in our souls, that we may both weep for sin, and turn from sin, if ever God restores comfort, it is to his mourners, *Isa*. lviii. 18. And when we

have wept, let us look up to Christ's blood for pardon: say, as that holy man, *lava Domine lachrymas meas*.-----Lord, wash my tears in thy blood. We drop sin with our tears; and need Christ's blood to wash them: and this repentance must not be only for a few days, like the mourning for a friend, which is soon over; but it must be the work of our lives: the issue of godly sorrow must not be stopt till death. After sin is pardoned, we must repent. We run afresh upon the score, *we sin daily, therefore must repent daily*. Some shed a few tears for sin; and, when their tears, like the widow's oil, have run a while, they cease. Many, if the plaister of repentance begin to smart a little, pluck it off; whereas this plaister of repentance must still ly on, and not be plucked off till death, when as all other tears, so these of godly sorrow, shall be wiped away.

Qu. *What shall we do to obtain a penitential frame of heart?*

Ans. Seek to God for it: It is his promise to give an *heart of flesh*, *Ezek*. xxxvi. and to *pour on us a spirit of mourning*; *Zech*. xii. 10. Beg God's *holy spirit*, *Pf*. cxlviii. 18. *He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow*. When the wind of God's spirit blows upon us, then the waters of repentant tears will flow from us.

## THE WORD READ AND PREACHED HOW EFFECTUAL?

III. **T**HE third way to escape the wrath and curse of God, and obtain the benefit of redemption by Christ, is, *The diligent use of ordinances*: in particular, the word, sacraments and prayer.

1. I begin with the first of these ordinances, I. The word, 1 *Thes*. ii. 13.----*which effectually worketh in you that believe*.

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the word's working effectually?*

Ans. The word of God is said to work *effectually*, when it hath that good effect upon us for which it was appointed of God; namely, when the word works powerful *illumination*, and thorow *reformation*, *Acts* xxvi. 18. *To open their eyes, and turn them from the power of Satan to God*. The opening their eyes, denotes *illumination*; and, turning them from Satan to God, denotes *reformation*.

Qu. 2. *How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?*

This question consists of two branches.

1. *How may the word be read effectually?*

2. *How may it be heard effectually.*

First, I shall begin with the first branch of the question, *How is the word to be read, that it may be effectual to salvation?*

Ans. That we may so read the word, that it may conduce effectually to our salvation:

1. Let us have a *reverend esteem* of every part of canonical scripture, *Pf*. cxix. 10. *More are they to be desired than gold*. Value this book of God above all other books; it is a golden epistle, endited by the Holy Ghost, sent us from heaven. More particularly, to raise our esteem, (1.) The scripture is a *spiritual glass*, to dress our souls by; it shows us more than we can see by the light of a natural conscience; that may



may discover gross sins; but the glass of the word shows us heart-sins, vain thoughts, unbelief, &c. And it only shows us our spots, but washeth them away. (2.) The scripture is a magazine, out of which we may fetch our spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. When the devil tempted our Saviour, he fetched armour and weapons from scripture, *it is written*, Mat. iv. 4, 7. (3.) The holy scripture is a *panacea*, or universal medicine for the soul; it gives a receipt to cure deadness of heart, *Pf. cxix. 50*. Pride, *1 Pet. v. 5*. Infidelity, *John iii. 36*. It is a physic garden, where we may gather an herb or antidote to expel the poison of sin. The leaves of scripture like the leaves of the tree of life, are for the healing of the nations, *Rev. xxii. 2*. And may not this cause a reverend esteem of the word?

2. If we would have the word written effectual to our souls, let us peruse it with *intenseness of mind*, *John v. 39*. *Search the scriptures*. The Greek word [*erynate*] signifies to search as for a vein of silver. The Bereans, *Acts xvii. searched the scriptures daily*. The word [*anakrimontes*] signifies to make a curious and critical search. And Apollo was mighty in the scriptures, *Acts xviii. 24*. Some gallop over a chapter in haste and get no good by it: if we would have the word effectual and saving, we must mind and observe every passage of scripture. And that we may be diligent in the perusal of scripture, consider,

*First*, The word written is *norma cultus*, the rule and platform by which we are to square our lives; it contains in it all things needful to salvation, *Pf. xix. 7*. what duties we are to do, what sins we are to avoid. God gave Moses a pattern how he would have the tabernacle made, and he was to go exactly according to the pattern, *Exod. xxv. 9*. The word is the pattern God hath given us in writing, for modelling our lives; therefore, how careful should we be in the pursuing and looking over this pattern?

*Secondly*, The written word, as it is our pattern, so it will be our judge, *John xii. 48*. *The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day*. We read of the opening of the books, *Rev. xx. 12*. This is one book God will open, the book of scripture, and will judge men out of it: he will say, have you lived according to the rule of this word? The word hath a double work, to teach, and to judge.

3. If we would have the word written effectual, we must bring faith to the reading of it: believe it to be the word of the eternal *Jehovah*. The word written comes with authority, it shews its commission from heaven, *Thus saith the Lord*---It is of divine inspiration, *2 Tim. iii. 16*. The oracles of scripture must be surer to us than a voice from heaven, *1 Pet. i. 18*. Unbelief enervates the virtue of scripture, and renders it ineffectual. First men question the truth of the scripture and then fall away from it.

4. If we would have the word written effectual to salvation, we must delight in it as our spiritual cordial, *Jer. xv. 16*. *Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart*. All true solid comfort is fetched out of the word. The word (as *Chrysostom* saith) is a spiritual garden; and the promises are the fragrant flowers or spices in this garden. How should we delight to walk among these beds of spices! is it not a comfort, in all dubious perplexed cases, to have a counsellor to advise us? *Pf. cxix. 24*. *Thy testimonies are my counsellors*. Is it not a comfort to find our evidences for heaven? and where should we find them but in the word? *1 Thes. i. 4, 5*. The word written is a sovereign elixir, or comfort in an hour of distress, *Pf. cxix. 50*. *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickned me*. It can turn all our water into wine. How should we take a great complacency and delight in the word! They only who come to the word with delight, go from it with success.

5. If we would have the scripture effectual and saving, we must be sure, when we have read the word, to hide it in our hearts, *Pf. cxix. 11*. *Thy word have I hid in my heart*. The word locked up in the heart is a preservative against sin. Why did David hide the word in his heart? In the next words, *That I might not sin against thee*. As one would carry an antidote about him when he comes near a place infected; so David carried the word in his heart, as a sacred antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin. When the sap is hid in the root, it makes the branches fruitful; when the seed is hid in the ground, then the corn springs up; so, when the word is hid in the heart, then it brings forth good fruit.

6. If we would have the word written effectual, let us labour, not only to have the light of the word in our heads, but the power

of the word in our hearts. Let us endeavour to have the word copied out, and written a second time in our hearts, *Pf. xxxvii. 31. The law of God is in his heart.* The word saith, *Be clothed with humility,* 1 Pet. v. 5. Let us be low and humble in our own eyes. The word calls for sanctity; *Let us labour to partake of the divine nature, and to have something conceived in us which is of the holy Ghost,* 2 Pet. i. 4. When the word is thus copied out into our hearts, and we are changed into the similitude of it, now the word written is made effectual to us, and becomes a savour of life.

7. & ult. When we read the holy scriptures, let us look up to God for a blessing: beg the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may see the deep things of God, *Eph. i. 17.* Pray to God, that the same Spirit that wrote the scripture, would enable us to understand it: Pray that God will give us that, *2 Cor. ii. 14.* that savour of knowledge, that we may relish a sweetness in the word we read. *David tasted it sweeter than the honey-cumb,* *Pf. xix. 10.* Let us pray that God will not only give us his word as a rule of holiness, but his grace as a principle of holiness.

2d. Branch of the 2d. Question. *How may we so hear the word, that it may be effectual and saving to our souls?*

*Ans.* 1. Give greater attention to the word preached; let nothing pass without taking special notice of it, *Luke xix. 48.* *All the people were very attentive to hear him, they hanged upon his lip.* *Acts xvi. 14.* *Lydia, a seller of purple, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.* Give attention to the word, as to a matter of life and death: and, to that purpose, have a care, (1.) To banish vain impertinent thoughts, which will distract you, and take you off from the work in hand. These fowls will be coming to the sacrifice, *Gen. xv. 11.* therefore we must drive them away. An archer may take a right aim; but if one stand at his elbow, and jog him when he is going to shoot, he will not hit the mark: Christians may have good aims in hearing; but take heed of impertinent thoughts which will jog and hinder you in God's service. (2.) Banish dulness. The devil gives many hearers a sleepy sop, they cannot keep their eyes open at a sermon: they eat so much on a Lord's day, that they are fitter for the pillow and couch, than the temple. Frequent

and customary sleeping at a sermon, shows high contempt and irreverence of the ordinance: it gives bad example to others; it makes your sincerity to be called in question; it is the devil's seed-time, *Matth. xiii. 25.* *While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares.* Oh shake off drowsiness, as *Paul* shook off the viper! Be serious and attentive in hearing the word, *Deut. xxxii. 47.* *For it is not a vain thing for you, it is your life.* When people do not mind what God speaks to them in his word, God doth as little mind what they say to him in prayer.

2. If you would have the word preached effectual, come with an holy appetite to the word, *1 Pet. ii. 2.* The thirsting soul is the thriving soul. In nature, one may have an appetite, and no digestion: but it is not so in religion; where there is a great appetite to the word, there is for the most part digestion, the word doth concoct and nourish. Come with hungerings of soul after the word: and therefore desire the word, that it may not only please you, but profit you. Look not more at the garnishing of the dish than the meat, at eloquence and rhetoric more than solid matter. It argues both a wanton palate, and surfeited stomach, to feed on fallads and kickshaws, rather than wholesome food.

3. If you would have the preaching of the word effectual, come to it with a tenderness upon your heart, *2 Chron. xxxiv. 19.* *Because thy heart was tender.* If we preach to hard hearts, it is like shooting against a brazen wall, the word doth not enter; it is like setting a gold seal upon marble, which takes no impression. Oh come to the word preached with a melting frame of heart! it is the melting wax receives the stamp of the seal: when the heart is in a melting frame, it will better receive the stamp of the word preached: when *Paul's* heart was melted and broken for sin, then, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* *Acts ix. 6.* Come not hither with hard hearts: who can expect a crop when the seed is sown upon stony ground?

4. If you would have the word effectual, receive it with meekness, *James i. 21.* *Receive with meekness the ingrafted word.* Meekness is a submissive frame of heart to the word, a willingness to hear the counsels and reproofs of the word. Contrary to this meekness, is, (1.) Fierceness of spirit, whereby men are ready to rise up in rage against the word. Proud men, and guilty, cannot endure to hear of their faults. Proud *Herod* put *John* in prison, *Mark xii. 12.*



The guilty *Jews* being told of their crucifying Christ, stoned *Stephen*, Acts ix. 57. To tell men of sin, is to hold a glass to one that is deformed, who cannot endure to see his own face.

(2.) Contrary to meekness is stubbornness of heart, whereby men are resolved to hold fast their sins, let the word say what it will, Jer. xlv. 16. *We will burn incense to the queen of heaven.* Oh take heed of this! if you would have the word preached work effectually, lay aside fierceness and stubbornness, receive the word with meekness. By meekness the word preached comes to be ingrafted. As a good cion that is ingrafted in a bad stock, doth change the nature of the fruit, and make it taste sweet; so when the word comes to be ingrafted into the soul, it sanctifies it, and makes it bring forth the sweet fruit of righteousness.

5. Mingle the word preached with faith, Heb. iv. 2. *The word preached profited not, not being mixed with faith.* If you leave out the chief ingredient in a medicine, it hinders the operation: do not leave out this ingredient of faith. Believe the word, and so believe it as to apply it. When you hear Christ preached, apply him to yourselves; this is to put on the Lord Jesus, Rom. xiii. 14. when you hear a promise spoken of, apply it; this is to suck the flower of the promise, and turn it to honey.

6. Be not only attentive in hearing, but retentive after hearing, Heb. ii. 1. *We ought to give the more diligent heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip.* Lest we should let them run out, as water out of a sieve: if the ground doth not retain the seed sown into it, there can be no good crop. Some have memories like leaking vessels, the sermons they hear are presently gone, and then there is no good done. If meat doth not stay and concoct on the stomach, it will not nourish. Satan labours to steal the word out of our mind, Mark iv. 15. *When they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown.* Our memories should be like the chest of the ark wherein the law was put.

7. Reduce your hearing to practice; live the sermons you hear, Ps. cxix. 166. *I have done thy commandments.* Rachel was not content that she was beautiful, but her desire was to be fruitful. What is a knowing head without a fruitful heart! Phil. i. 11. *Filled with the fruits of righteousness.* It is obedience crowns hearing: that hearing will never save the soul, which doth not reform the life.

8. Beg of God that he will accompany his word with his presence and blessing. The spirit must make all effectual: ministers may prescribe physic, but it is God's Spirit must make it work. "He hath his pulpit in heaven that converts souls," *Austin.* Acts x. 44. *While Peter was speaking, the holy Ghost fell on all them that heard.* It is said, the alchymist can draw oil out of iron. God's spirit can produce grace in the most obdurate heart.

9. If you would have the word work effectually to your salvation, make it familiar to you, discourse of the word you have heard when you come home, Ps. cxix. 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word.* That may be one reason why some people get no more good by what they hear, because they never speak one to another of what they have heard: as if sermons were such secrets, that they must not be spoken of again; or as if it were a shame to speak of matters of salvation, Mal. iii. 16. *They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written.*

*Use. Caution.* Take heed, as you love your souls, that the word become not ineffectual to you. There are some to whom the word preached is ineffectual. (1.) Such as censure the word; instead of judging themselves, judge the word. (2.) Such as live in contradiction to the word, Isa. xxx. 8. (3.) Such as are more hardened by the word, Zech. vii. 11. *They made their hearts as an adamant.* And when men harden their hearts wilfully, God hardens them judicially, Isa. vi. 8. *Make their ears heavy.* The word to these is ineffectual: were it not sad, if a man's meat should not nourish; nay, if it should turn to poison? Oh! take heed that the word preached be not ineffectual and to no purpose. Consider three things.

(1.) If the word preached doth us no good, there is no other way by which we can be saved. This is God's institution, and the main engine he useth to convert souls, Luke xvi. 31. *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho' one rose from the dead.* If an angel should come to you out of heaven, and preach of the excellency of the glorified estate, and the joys of heaven, and that in the most pathetic manner; if the word preached doth not persuade, neither would you be wrought upon by such an oration from heaven. If a damned spirit should come from hell, and preach to you in flames, and tell you what a place hell is, and roar out the torments of the damned,

damned, it might make you tremble, but it would not convert, if the preaching of the word would not do it.

(2.) To come to the word, and not be savingly wrought upon, is that which the devil is pleased with; he cares not though you hear frequently, if it be not effectually: he is not an enemy to hearing, but profiting. Though the minister holds out the breasts of the ordinances to you, he cares not as long as you do not suck the sincere milk of the word. The devil cares not how many sermon-pills you take, so long as they do not work upon your con-

science.

(3.) If the word preached be not effectual to mens conversion, it will be effectual to their condemnation: the word will be effectual one way or other; if it doth not make your hearts better, it will make your chains heavier. We pity them who have not the word preached, but it will be worse with them who are not sanctified by it: dreadful is their case, who go loaden to hell with sermons. But I will conclude with the apostle, *Heb. vi. 9. I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.*

## OF BAPTISM.

**MATTH. xxviii. 19.** *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them-----*

**W**E are still upon that question in the catechism,

*"What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?"*

*"Ans. They are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer."*

I have spoken to the first, *The word preached.* I now proceed to the second.

**II.** *The way whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, is, in the use of the sacraments.*

**Qu. 1.** *What are sacraments in general?*

*Ans.* They are visible signs of invisible grace.

**Qu. 2.** *Is not the word of God sufficient to salvation? What need then is there of sacraments?*

*Ans.* We must not be wise above what is written: this may satisfy, it is God's will, that his church should have sacraments; and it is God's goodness, thus by sacraments to condescend to our weak capacities, *John iv. 48.* Except ye see signs, ye will not believe. God, to strengthen our faith, confirms the covenant of grace, not only by promises, but by sacramental signs.

**Qu. 3.** *What are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

*Ans.* Two: baptism, and the Lord's supper.

**Qu. 4.** *But are there no more? the papists tell of five more, viz. confirmation, penance,*

*matrimony, orders, and the extreme unction.*

*Ans.* 1. There were but two sacraments under the law, therefore there are no more now, *1 Cor. x. 2, 3, 4.*

2. These two sacraments are sufficient: the one signifying our entrance into Christ, and the other our growth and perseverance in him.

(1.) I begin with the first sacrament, *Baptism.* *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them----- Go teach all nations: the Greek word is, Make disciples of all nations.* If it be asked, how should we make them disciples? It follows, *Baptizing them, and teaching them.* In a heathen nation, First teach them, and then baptize them; but in a Christian church, First baptize them, and then teach them.

**Qu. 5.** *What is baptism?*

*Ans.* In general, it is a matriculation, or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ's flock: more particularly, *Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing or sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.*

**Qu. 6.** *What is the meaning of the parent in presenting his child to be baptized?*

*Ans.* The parent, in presenting his child to



be baptized, doth, (1.) Make a public acknowledgement of original sin; that the soul of his child is polluted, therefore needs washing away of sin by Christ's blood and spirit; both which washings are signified by the sprinkling of water in baptism. (2.) The parent, by bringing his child to be baptized, doth solemnly devote his child to the Lord, and enrol him in God's family: and truly this may be a great satisfaction to a religious parent, that he hath given up his child to the Lord in baptism. How can a parent look with comfort on that child, who was never yet dedicated to God?

Qu. 7. *What is the benefit then of baptism?*

Ans. The party baptized hath, (1.) An entrance into the visible body of the church. (2.) The party baptized hath a right sealed to the ordinances, which is a privilege full of glory, *Rom. ix. 4.* (3.) The child baptized is under a more special providential care of Christ, who appoints the tutelage of angels to be the infants life-guard.

Qu. 8. *Is this all the benefit?*

Ans. No: to such as belong to the election, baptism is a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, *Rom. iv. 11.* a laver of regeneration, and a badge of adoption.

Qu. 9. *How doth it appear that children have a right to baptism?*

Ans. Children are parties of the covenant of grace. The covenant was made with them, *Gen. xvii. 7. I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee; And Acts ii. 39. The promise is to you and to your children.* The covenant of grace may be considered either, (1.) More strictly, as an *absolute promise to give saving grace*; and so none but the elect are in covenant with God. Or, (2.) More largely, as a covenant containing in it many outward glorious privileges, in which respect the children of believers do belong to the covenant of grace: *the promise is to you and to your seed.* The infant-seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the covenant of grace as their parents; and having a right to the covenant, they cannot justly be denied baptism, which is the seal. I would ask this question of them who deny *infant baptism*, It is certain the children of believers were once visibly in covenant with God, and did receive the seal of their admission into the church; now, where do we find this covenant-interest, or church-membership of infants was ever re-

pealed or made void? Certainly Jesus Christ did not come to put believers and their children into a worse condition than they were in before. If the children of believers should not be baptized, then they are in a worse condition now, than they were in before Christ's coming.---- Before I come to prove the baptizing of infants, I shall answer the objections made against it.

Obj. 1. *The scripture is silent herein, and doth not mention infant-baptism.*

Ans. Though there is not the word *infant-baptism* in scripture, yet there is the thing: there is not mention made in scripture of women receiving the sacrament; but who doubts but the command, *Take, eat, this is my body*, concerns them? Doth not their faith need strengthening as well as others? So the word *Trinity* is not to be found in scripture, but there is that which is equivalent, *1 John v. 7. There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.* So, though the word *infant-baptism* is not mentioned in scripture, yet the practice of baptizing infants, may be drawn out of scripture by undeniable consequence.

Qu. *How is that proved?*

Ans. The scripture mentions *whole families* baptized: as the household of *Lydia, Crispus*, and the jailor, *Acts xvi. 34. He was baptized, he and all his.* Wherein we must rationally imagine that there were some little children. If it be said, there is no mention there made of children: I answer, neither are servants named: yet it cannot be supposed but that, in so great a family, there were some servants.

Obj. 2. *But Infants are not capable of the end of Baptism: For baptism signifies the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Now infants cannot understand this: therefore, what benefit can baptism be to them?*

Ans. Whereas it is said, infants cannot understand the mystery of baptism, neither could the child that was to be circumcised understand *circumcision*; yet the ordinance of *circumcision* was not to be omitted or deferred. An infant, though it understand not the meaning of baptism, yet it may partake of the blessing of baptism. The little children that Christ took in his arms, understood not Christ's meaning, but they had Christ's blessing, *Mark x. 16. He put his hands upon them and blessed them.*

Qu. *But what benefit can the child have of baptism, if it understands not the nature of baptism?*

Ans.

*Ans.* It may have a right to the promise sealed up, which it shall have an actual interest in when it comes to have faith. A legacy may be of use to the child in the cradle; though it now understand not the legacy, yet when it is grown up to years, it is fully possessed of it. But it may be further objected;

**Obj.** *The party to be baptized, is to be engaged to God; but how can the child engage?*

*Ans.* The parents can engage for it, which God is pleased to accept as equivalent to the child's personal engaging.

**Obj. 3.** *If baptism comes in the room of circumcision, only the males were circumcised, Gen. xvii. 30. Then, what warrant is there for baptizing females?*

*Ans.* The females were included, and were virtually circumcised in the males. What is done to the head is done to the body; the man therefore being the head of the woman, 1 Cor. xi. 3. what is done to the male-sex, was interpretatively done to the female. Having answer'd these objections. I come now to prove by argument infant-baptism.

**1st Argument.** If children during their infancy are capable of grace, then they are capable of baptism: but children in their infancy are capable of grace, therefore they are capable of baptism. I prove the *minor*, that they are capable of grace, thus; if children in their infancy may be saved, then they are capable of grace; but children in their infancy may be saved; which is proved thus: if the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, then they may be saved, but this kingdom of heaven may belong to them, as it is clear from *Mark x. 14. Of such is the kingdom of God.* Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?

**2d. Arg.** If infants may be among the number of *God's servants*, then there is no reason why they should be shut out of God's family; but infants may be in the number of God's servants, that is evident, because God calls them his servants, *Lev. xxv. 4. He shall depart from thee, and his children with him, for they are my servants.* Therefore children in their infancy being God's servants, why should they not have baptism, which is the *teffera*, the mark or seal which God sets upon his servants?

**3d. Arg.** is from 1 Cor. vii. 14. *But now are your children holy.* Children are not called *holy*, as if they were free from original sin; but in the judgment of Charity they are to be esteemed

holy, and true members of the church of God, because their parents are believers. Hence that excellent divine Mr. *Heldersam* saith, *that the children of the faithful, as soon as they are born, have a covenant-holiness, and so a right and title to baptism, which is the token of the covenant.*

**4th. Arg.** from the opinion of the fathers and the practice of the church, (1.) The ancient fathers were strong asserters of infant-baptism, *Irenaeus, Basil, Lactantius, Cyprian and Austin.* (2.) It was the practice of the *Greek* church to baptize her infants. *Erasmus* saith, that infant baptism hath been used in the church of God for above fourteen hundred years. And *St. Austin*, in his book against *Pelagius*, affirms, that it hath been the custom of the church in all ages to baptize infants. Yea, it was an apostolical practice; *St. Paul* affirms, that he baptized the *whole house of Stephanus*, 1 Cor. i. 16.

And as you have seen scripture-arguments for infant baptism, so let us consider whether the practice of those who delay the baptizing of children till riper years, be warrantable.--- For my part, I cannot gather it from scripture: For though we read of persons adult and grown up to years of discretion in the apostles times baptized, yet those were such as were converted from heathenish idolatry to the true orthodox faith: but that in a Christian church the children of believers should be kept unbaptized several years, I know neither precept nor example for it in scripture, but it is wholly apocryphal. The baptizing of persons grown up to maturity, we may argue against *ab effectu*, from the ill consequence of it: they dip the persons they baptize, over head and ears in cold water, and naked; which as it is indecent, so it is dangerous, and hath been often times the occasion of *chronical* diseases, yea, death itself; and so it is a plain breach of the sixth commandment. And how far God hath given up many persons, who are for the deferring of baptism, to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident, if we consult with history; especially if we read over the acts of the *Anabaptists in Germany.*

**Use 1.** See the riches of God's goodness, who will not only be the God of believers, but takes their seed into covenant, *Gen. xvii. 7. I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee and thy seed.* A father counts it a great privilege, not only to have his own name, but his child's name but in a will.

*Use 2.*



*Use 2.* It blames those parents who forbid little children to be brought to Christ: they withhold the ordinance. By denying their infants baptism, they exclude them from having a membership in the visible church, and so their infants are sucking pagans. Such as deny their children baptism, make God's institutions under the law more full of kindness and grace to children, than they are now under the gospel; which, how strange a paradox it is, I leave you to judge.

*Use 3. Of exhortation. Branch 1.* We that are baptized, let us labour to find the blessed fruits of baptism in our own souls: let us labour not only to have the sign of the covenant, but the grace of the covenant. Many glory in this, that they are baptized. The Jews gloried in their *circumcision*, because of their royal privileges: to them belonged the *adoption, and the glory, and the covenant*, Rom. ix. 4. But many of them were a shame and reproach to their circumcision, Rom. ii. 24. *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* The scandalous Jews (tho' circumcised) were, in God's account, as heathens, Amos ix. 7. *Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me? saith the Lord.* Alas! what is it to have the name of Christ, and want his image? what is baptism of water, without the baptism of the Spirit? many baptized Christians are no better than heathens. O labour to find the fruits of baptism, that Christ is formed in us, Gal. iv. 19. that our nature is changed, we are made holy and heavenly: this is to be baptized unto Jesus, Rom. vi. 3. Such as live unsuitable to their baptism, may go with baptismal-water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths, to hell.

*Branch 2.* Let us labour to make a right use of our baptism.

*First use of baptism.* Let us use it as a shield against temptations. Satan, I have given up myself to God by a sacred vow in baptism; I am not my own, I am Christ's: therefore I cannot yield to thy temptations, but I break my oath of allegiance which I made to God in baptism. Luther tells us of a pious woman, who when the devil tempted her to sin, she answered, Satan, *Baptizata sum, I am baptized*: and so beat back the tempter.

*Second use of baptism.* Let us use it as a spur to holiness. By remembering our baptism, let us be stirred up to make good our baptismal engagements: renouncing the world, flesh, and

devil, let us devote ourselves to God and his service. To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, implies a solemn dedication of ourselves to the service of all the three Persons in the Trinity. It is not enough that our parents dedicate us to God in baptism, but we must dedicate ourselves to him: this is called a *living to the Lord*, Rom. xiv. 8. Our life should be spent in worshipping God, in loving God, in exalting God: we should walk as becomes the gospel, Phil. i. 27. Shine as stars in the world, and live as earthly angels.

*Third use of baptism.* Let us use it as an argument to courage. We should be ready to confess that holy Trinity, into whose name we were baptized. With the conversion of the heart, must go the confession of the tongue, Luke xii. 8. *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.* Peter openly confessed Christ crucified, Acts iv. 10. Cyprian, a man of a brave spirit, was like a rock, whom no waves could shake; like an adamant, whom no sword could cut: he confessed Christ before the proconsul, and suffered himself to be proscribed; yea, chose death, rather than he would betray the truths of Christ. He that dares not confess the holy Trinity, shames his baptism, and God will be ashamed to own him at the day of judgment.

*Ult. use.* See the fearfulness of the sin of apostacy! 'Tis a renouncing of our baptism. 'Tis damnable perjury to go away from God after a solemn vow, 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me.* He turned renegade, and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. Julian the apostate (Gregory Nazianzen observes) bathed himself in the blood of beasts offered in sacrifice to heathen-gods; and so, as much as in him lay, washed off his former baptism. The case of such as fall away after baptism, is dreadful, Heb. x. 38. *If any man draw back.* The Greek word, to draw back, alludes to a soldier that steals away from his colours: so, if any man steal away from Christ, and run over to the devil's side, *my soul shall have no pleasure in him*; that is, I will be severely avenged on him; I will make my arrows drunk with his blood. If all the plagues in the Bible can make that man miserable, he shall be so.

II. The second sacrament wherein Jesus Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, is the *Lord's supper*.

## OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MARK XIV. 22. *And as they did eat, Jesus took Bread, &c.*

II. **H**AVING spoken of the sacrament of baptism, I come now to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper is the most spiritual and sweet ordinance that ever was instituted: here we have to do more immediately with the person of Christ. In prayer, we draw nigh to God; in the sacrament we become one with the person of Christ. In prayer, we draw nigh to God; in the sacrament we become one with him. In prayer we look up to Christ; in the sacrament, by faith, we touch him. In the word preached, we hear Christ's voice; in the sacrament we feed on him.

Qu. 1. *What names and titles in scripture are given to the sacrament?*

Ans. 1. It is called, (1.) *Mensa Domini*, *The Lord's table*, 1 Cor. x. 21. The papists call it an altar, not a table. The reason is, because they turn the sacrament into a sacrifice, and pretend to offer up Christ corporally in the mass. It being the Lord's table, shews with what reverence and solemn devotion we should approach to these holy mysteries: the Lord takes notice of the frame of our hearts when we come to this table, *Matth. xxii. 11. The king came in to see the guests*. We dress ourselves when we come to the table of some great monarch; we should think with ourselves, we are going to the table of the Lord, therefore should dress ourselves by holy meditation and heart-consideration. Many think it is enough to come to the sacrament, but mind not whether they come in due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. Perhaps they had scarce a serious thought before, whither they were going: all their dressing was by the glass, not by the Bible. *Chrysostom* calls it, *The dreadful table of the Lord*: so it is to such as come unworthily. (2.) The sacrament is called, *cæna Domini*, *the Lord's supper*, 1 Cor. xi. 20. to import, it is a *spiritual feast*. It is indeed a royal feast; God is in this cheer; Christ, in both natures, God and man, is the matter of this supper. (3.) The sacrament is called a *communion*, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body*

*of Christ?* The sacrament being called a communion, shews,

1st, That this ordinance is only for believers, because none else can have communion with Christ in these holy mysteries.-----*Communio fundatur in unione*: faith only gives us union with Christ, and by virtue of this we have communion with him in his body and blood. None but the spouse communicates with her husband; a stranger may drink of his cup, but she only hath his heart, and communicates with him in a conjugal manner; so strangers may have the sign, drink of the cup, but only believers drink of Christ's blood, and have communion with him in his privileges.

2ly, The sacrament being a communion, shews, that it is a *symbolum amoris*, a bond of that unity and charity which should be among Christians, 1 Cor. x. 17. *We being many are one body*. As many grains make one bread, so many Christians are one body. A sacrament is a love-feast. The primitive Christians (as *Justin Martyr* notes) had their holy salutations at the blessed supper, in token of that dearneſs of affection which they did bear to each other. It is a communion, therefore must be love and union. The *Israelites* did eat the passover with bitter herbs; so must we eat the sacrament with bitter herbs of repentance, but not with bitter hearts of wrath and malice. The hearts of the communicants should be knit together with the bond of love. *Thou braggest of thy faith* (saith *Austin*) *but show me thy faith by thy love to the saints*. For, as in the sun, light and heat are inseparable; so faith and love are twisted together inseparably. Where there are divisions, the Lord's supper is not properly a communion, but a disunion.

Qu. 2. *What is the Lord's supper?*

Ans. It is a visible sermon, wherein Christ crucified is set before us; or, it is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by receiving the holy elements of bread and wine, our communion with Christ is signified and sealed up to us. Or thus, it is a sacrament divinely instituted;



stituted; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, Christ's death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are, by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, and all the benefits flowing from thence.

For the further explaining of the nature of the Lord's supper, I shall look back to the institution.

1. *Jesus*] *took bread.* Here is the *Master of the feast*, or the Instituter of the sacrament. The Lord Jesus he took bread. He only is fit to institute a sacrament, who is able to give virtue and blessing to it.

2. *He took bread.*] Christ's taking of the bread was one part of his consecration of the elements, and setting them apart for an holy use. And as Christ did consecrate the elements, so we must labour to have our hearts consecrated before we receive these holy mysteries in the Lord's supper. How unseemly a sight is it to see any come to these holy elements, having hearts leavened with pride, covetousness, envy! These do, with Judas, receive the devil in the sop, and are no better than crucifiers of the Lord of glory.

3. *And blessed it.*] This is another part of the consecration of the element, Christ blessed it; he blebseth, and it shall be blessed, *viz.* he looked up to heaven for a benediction upon this ordinance newly founded.

4. *And brake it.*] The bread broken, and the wine poured out, was to signify to us the agony and ignominy of Christ's sufferings, the rending of Christ's body on the cross, and that effusion of blood which was distilled from his blessed sides.

5. *And gave it*] *to them.* Christ's giving the bread, denotes Christ's giving of himself and all his benefits to us freely. Tho' Christ was sold, yet given; Judas did sell Christ, but Christ gave himself to us.

6. *He gave it to them.*] *viz.* The disciples. This is childrens bread; Christ doth not cast these pearls before swine. Whether Judas was present at the supper, is controverted: I rather incline to think he was not: for Christ said to the disciples, *This is my blood, which is shed for you*, Luke xxii. 20. Christ knew his blood was never shed effectually and intentionally for Judas. In eating the passover, Christ gave Judas a sop, which was a bit of unleavened bread dipt in a sauce made with bitter herbs; Judas having received the sop, went immediately out, John xiii. But, suppose Judas were there,

though he received the element, yet not the blessing.

7. *Take, eat.*] This expression of eating denotes four things; (1.) The near *mystical union* between Christ and his saints. As the meat which is eaten incorporates with the body, and becomes one with it; so, by eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood spiritually, we partake of his merits and graces, and are mystically *One with him*, John xvii. 23. *I in them.* (2.) *Take, eat.* Eating shows the infinite delight the believing soul hath in Christ. Eating is grateful and pleasing to the palate: so feeding on Christ by a lively faith is delicious. *Nullus animæ suavior cibus*, Lactantius. No such sweet feeding as on Christ crucified. This is a *feast of fat things, and wines on the lees well refined.* (3.) *Take, eat.* Eating denotes nourishment. Meat, as it is delicious to the palate, so it is nourishing to the body: so eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, is nutritive to the soul. The new creature is nourished at the table of the Lord, to everlasting life, John vi. 34. *Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.* (4.) *Take, eat,* shows the wisdom of God, who restores us by the same means by which we fell. We fell by taking and eating the forbidden fruit, and we are recovered again by taking and eating of Christ's flesh: we died by eating the tree of knowledge, and we live by eating the tree of life.

8. *This is my body.*] These words, *Hoc est corpus meum*, have been much controverted between us and the papists. *This is my body*: that is, by a *metonymy*: it is a *sign and figure of my body.* The papists hold transubstantiation, that the bread is, after consecration, turned into the very substance of Christ's body. We say, we receive Christ's body spiritually: they say, they receive Christ's body carnally; which is contrary to scripture. The scripture affirms, that *the heavens must receive Christ's body until the times of the restitution of all things*, Acts ii. 21. Christ's body cannot be at the same time in heaven, and in the host. Aquinas saith, *It is not possible by any miracle, that a body should be locally in two places at once.* Besides, it is absurd to imagine, that the bread in the sacrament should be turned into Christ's flesh, and that his body, which was hung before, should be made again of bread. So that, *This is my body*, is, as if Christ had said, *This is a sign and representation of my body.*

9. *And*

9. *And he took the cup.*] The cup is put by a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct, for the wine in the cup; it signifies the blood of Christ shed for our sins. The *taking of the cup*, denotes the redundancy of merit in Christ, and the fulness of our redemption by him. He not only took the bread, but the cup.

10. *And when he had given thanks.*] Christ gave thanks that God had given these elements of bread and wine to be signs and seals of man's redemption by Christ. Christ's giving of thanks, shows his philanthropy, or love to mankind, who did so rejoice and bless God, that lost man, was now in a way of recovery, and that he should be raised higher in Christ than ever he was in innocency.

11. *He gave the cup to them.*] Why then dare any withhold the cup? This is to pollute and curtail the ordinance, and alter it from it's primitive institution. Christ and his apostles administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the cup, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And the cup was received in the ancient church for the space of 1400 years, as is confessed by two popish councils. Christ saith expressly, *Drink ye all of this.* He doth not say, eat ye all of this; but, *Drink ye all;* as foreseeing the sacrilegious impiety of the church of Rome in keeping back the cup from the people. The popish council of *Constance* speaks plainly but impudently, *That although Christ instituted and administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the wine; yet the authority of the holy canons, and the custom of the mother-church, think good to deny the cup to the laity.* Thus, as the popish priests make Christ but half a Saviour, so they administer to the people but half a sacrament. The sacrament is Christ's last-will and testament: in the text, *This is my blood of the new testament.* Now, to alter or take away any thing from a man's will and testament, is a great impiety: What is it to alter and mangle Christ's last-will and testament? Sure it is an high affront to Christ.

Qu. 3. *What are the ends of the Lord's supper?*

Ans. It is an ordinance appointed to confirm our faith, John iv. 48. *Except ye see signs ye will not believe.* Christ's sets the elements before us, that by these signs our faith may be strengthened. As faith cometh by hearing, so it is confirmed by seeing Christ crucified. The sacrament is not only a sign to represent Christ, but a seal to confirm our interest in him.

Obj. *But it is the spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament.*

Ans. This is no good logic. The spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament, is, as if one should say, God feeds our bodies, therefore bread doth not feed us; whereas God feeds us by bread: so the spirit confirms our faith by the use of the sacrament.

2. The end of the sacrament is, to keep up the *memory of Christ's death*, 1 Cor. xi. 25. *This do ye in remembrance of me.* If a friend give us a ring at his death, we wear it to keep up the memory of our friend; much more then ought we to keep up the memorial of Christ's death in the sacrament: Christ's death lays a foundation for all the magnificent blessings which we receive from Christ. The covenant of grace was agreed on in heaven, but sealed upon the cross. Christ hath sealed all the articles of peace in his blood. Remission of sin flows from Christ's death, Mat. xxvi. 28. *This is my blood of the new testament shed for many for the remission of sins.* Consecration, or making us holy, is the fruit of Christ's death, Heb. ix.

14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, purge your conscience!* Christ's intercession is made available to us by virtue of his death; Christ would not have been admitted an advocate, if he had not been first a sacrifice. Our entering into heaven is the fruit of Christ's blood, Heb. x. 19. Christ could not have prepared mansions for us, if he had not first purchased them by his death: so that we have a great deal of cause to commemorate Christ's death in the sacrament.

Qu. *In what manner are we to remember the Lord's death in the sacrament?*

Ans. It is not only an historical remembrance of Christ's death and passion; thus Judas remembers Christ's death, and how he betrayed him; and Pilate remembers Christ's death, and how he crucified him: but our remembering Christ's death in the sacrament must be,

(1.) A *mournful remembrance.* We must not be able to look on Christ crucified with dry eyes, Zech. xii. 10. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn over him.* O Christian, when thou lookest on Christ in the sacrament, remember how oft thou hast crucified him! The Jews did it but once, thou often. Every oath is a nail with which thou piercest his hands: every unjust, sinful action is a spear with which thou woundest his heart. O remember Christ with sorrow, to think thou shouldst make his wounds bleed afresh!



MARK XIV. 22, 23, 24. *Jesus took Bread, &c.*

(2) **I**T must be a *joyful remembrance*, John viii. 56. *Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced.* When a Christian sees a sacrament-day approach, he should rejoyce. This ordinance of the supper is an earnest of heaven; 'tis the glass in which we see him whom our souls love; it is the chariot by which we are carried up to Christ: *When Jacob saw the wag-gons and the chariots which were to carry him to his son Joseph, his spirit revived*, Gen. xlv. 27. God hath appointed the sacrament, on purpose to cheer and revive a sad heart. When we look on our sins, we have cause to mourn; but when we see Christ's blood shed for our sin, this may make us rejoyce. In the sacrament our wants are supplied, our strength is renewed: here we meet with Christ, and doth not this call for joy? A woman that hath been long debarred from the society of her husband, how glad is she of his presence! At the sacrament the believing spouse meets with Christ: he saith to her, *All I have is thine; my love is thine, to pity thee; my mercy is thine, to save thee.* How can we think in the sacrament on Christ's blood shed, and not rejoyce? *Sanguis Christi clavis paradisi*; Christ's blood is the key which opens heaven, else we had been all shut out.

3. *End* of the sacrament is, to work in us an endeared love to Christ. When Christ bleeds over us, well may we say, *Behold how he loved us!* Who can see Christ die, and not be *sick of love*? That is an heart of stone, whom Christ's love will not melt.

4. *End* of the sacrament, the mortifying of corruption. To see Christ crucified for us, is a means to crucify sin in us. Christ's death (like the water of jealousy) makes the *thigh of sin to rot*, Numb. v. 27. How can a wife endure to see that spear which killed her husband? how can we endure those sins which made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood? When the people of *Rome* saw *Cæsar's* bloody robe, they were incensed against them that slew him. Sin hath rent the white robe of Christ's flesh, and dy'd it of a crimson colour: the thoughts of this will make us seek to be avenged on our sins.

5. *End*, the augmentation and increase of all the graces, *hope, zeal, patience.* The word preached begets grace, the Lord's supper nourisheth it: the body by feeding increaseth strength; so doth the soul by feeding on Christ sacramentally. *Cum defecerit virtus mea calicem salutarem accipiam*, Bern. *When my spiritual strength begins to fail, I know a remedy*, (saith Bernard) *I will go to the table of the Lord; there I will drink, and recover my decayed strength.* There is difference between *dead stones* and *living plants*. The wicked, who are stones, receive no spiritual increase; but the godly, who are plants of righteousness, being watered with Christ's blood, grow more fruitful in grace.

Qu. *Why are we to receive this holy supper?*

Ans. Because it is a duty incumbent, *Take, Eat.* And observe, it is a command of love. If Christ had commanded us some great matter, would not we have done it? *2 Kings v. 13. If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?* If Christ had enjoined us to have given him thousands of rams, or to have parted with the fruit of our bodies, would we not have done it? Much more when he only saith, *Take and Eat*: Let my broken body feed you, let my blood poured out, save you. *Take and Eat.* This is a command of love, and shall we not readily obey?

2. We are to celebrate the Lord's supper, because it is a *provoking* of Christ, to stay away, *Prov. ix. 2. Wisdom hath furnished her table.* So Christ has furnished his table, set bread and wine (representing his body and blood) before his guests, and they wilfully turn their backs upon the ordinance: Christ looks upon it as a slighting of his love, and that makes the fury rise up in his face, *Luke xiv. 24. For I say unto you, that none of those that were bidden shall taste of my supper.* I will shut them out of my kingdom, I will provide them a black banquet, where *weeping* shall be the first *course*, and *gnashing of teeth* the second.

Qu. 5. *Whether the Lord's supper be oft to be administered?*

Ans. *Yes:*

*Ans.* Yes: 1 Cor. xi. 26. *As oft as ye eat of this bread.* The ordinance is not to be celebrated once in a year, or once in our lives, but *often*. A Christian's own necessities may make him come often hither. His corruptions are strong, therefore he had need come often hither for an antidote to expel the poison of sin; and his graces are weak. Grace is like a lamp, *Rev.* iii. 2. if it be not often fed with oil, it is apt to go out. How therefore do they sin against God, who come but very seldom to this ordinance! Can they thrive, who for a long time forbear their food: and others there are who do wholly forbear: this is a great contempt offered to Christ's ordinance. Men do as it were tacitly say, let Christ keep his feast to himself. What a cross-grained piece is man! he will eat when he should not, and he will not eat when he should. When God said, *Eat not of this forbidden fruit*; then he will be sure to eat: when God saith, *Eat of this bread, and drink of this cup*; then he refuseth to eat.

*Qu.* 6. *Are all to come promiscuously to this holy ordinance?*

*Ans.* No; that were to make the Lord's table an *ordinary*. Christ forbids to *cast pearls before swine*, *Matth.* vii. 6. The sacramental bread is *childrens bread*, and it is not to be cast to the prophane. As, at the giving of the law, God *set bounds about the mount*, that none might touch it, *Exod.* xix. 12. So God's table should be guarded, that the prophane should not come near. In the primitive times, after sermon done, and they were going to celebrate the Lord's supper, an officer stood up and cried, *Holy things for holy men*: and then several of the congregation were to depart. *I would have my hand cut off* (saith *Chrysostom*) *rather than I would give Christ's body and blood to the prophane*. The wicked do not eat Christ's flesh, but tear it; they do not drink his blood, but spill it. These holy mysteries in the sacraments are *tremenda mysteria*, mysteries that the soul is to tremble at. Sinners defile the holy things of God, they poison the sacramental cup. We read that the wicked are to be set at Christ's feet, *Pf. ex.* not at his table.

*Qu.* 7. *How may we receive the supper of the Lord worthily, that so it may become effectual to us?*

*Ans.* That we may receive it worthily, and it may become efficacious.

(1.) We must solemnly prepare ourselves before we come: we must not rush upon the or-

dinance rudely and irreverently, but come in due order. There was a great deal of preparation to the passover, 2 *Chron.* xxx. 18, 19. and the sacrament comes in the room of it.

*Qu.* *Wherein doth this solemn preparing for the ordinance consist?*

*Ans.* (1.) In examining ourselves. (2.) In dressing our souls before we come, which is by washing in the water of repentance. (3.) By exciting the habit of grace into exercise. (4.) In begging a blessing upon the ordinance.

(1.) *Solemn preparing* for the sacrament consists in *self-examining*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.* It is not only a counsel, but a charge: *Let him examine himself.* As if a king should say, *Let it be enacted.* Jesus Christ having by his institution consecrated these elements in the supper to an high mystery, they represent his *body and blood*: therefore there must be preparation; and if preparation, then there must be first examining ourselves, without which there can be no preparation. Let us be serious in this examining ourselves, our salvation depends upon it. We are curious in examining other things; we will not take gold, but examine it by the touch-stone; we will not take land, but we will examine the title: and shall not we be as exact and curious in examining the state of our souls?

*Qu.* 1. *What is required to this self-examining?*

*Ans.* There must be a *solemn retiring* of the soul. We must set ourselves apart, and retire for some time from all secular employment, that we may be more serious in this work. There is no casting up of accounts in a crowd; nor can we examine ourselves when we are in a crowd of worldly business. We read, a man that was in a *journey might not come to the passover*, *Numb.* ix. 13. because his mind was full of secular cares, and his thoughts were taken up about his journey. When we are upon self-examining work, we had not need to be in an hurry, or have any distracting thoughts, but retire and lock up ourselves in our closet, that we may be more intent in the work.

*Qu.* 2. *What is self-examination?*

*Ans.* It is a setting up a court in conscience, and keeping a regilter there, that by a strict scrutiny a man may see how matters stand between God and his soul. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition, an heart-anatomy, whereby a man takes his heart, as a *watch*, all in



pieces, and sees what is defective there. It is a dialogue with one's self, *Pf. lxxvii. 7. I commune with my own heart.* David called himself to account, and put interrogatories to his own heart. Self-examining is a critical descant or search: as the woman in the parable did light a candle, and *search for her lost groat*, Luke xv. 8. so conscience is the *candle of the Lord*; search with this candle what thou canst find wrought by the Spirit in thee.

Qu. 3. *What is the rule by which we are to examine ourselves?*

Ans. The rule or measure we must examine ourselves by, is, the holy scripture. We must not make fancy, or the good opinion which others have of us, the rule by which we judge of ourselves. But as the goldsmith brings his gold to the touch-stone, so must we bring our hearts to a scripture touch-stone; *To the law, to the testimony*, Isa. viii. 20. What faith the word? *Are we divorced from sin?* are we renewed by the Spirit? Let the word decide whether we are fit communicants or no. We judge of colours by the sun, so must we judge of the state of our souls by the sun-light of scripture.

Qu. 4. *What are the cogent reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's table?*

Ans. 1. It is a duty imposed; let him examine himself. The passover was not to be eaten raw, *Exod. xii. 19.* To come to such an ordinance slightly, without examination, is to come in an undue manner, and is like eating the passover raw.

2. We must examine ourselves before we come, because it is not only a duty imposed but opposed. There is nothing the heart naturally is more averse from, than self-examination: we may know that duty is good which the heart opposeth. But why doth the heart so oppose it? Because it doth cross the tide of corrupt nature; 'tis contrary to flesh and blood. The heart is guilty; and doth a guilty person love to be examined? The heart opposeth it, therefore the rather set upon it: that duty is good which the heart opposeth.

3. Because self-examining is so needful a work; as appears, (1.) Without self-examination, a man can never tell how it is with him, whether he hath grace or no; and this must needs be very uncomfortable. He knows not, if he should die presently, what will become of him, or to what coast he shall sail, whether to hell or heaven; as *Socrates* said, *I am about*

*to die, and the Gods know whether I shall be happy or miserable.* How needful therefore is self-examination, that a man by search may come to know the true state of his soul, and may guess how it will go with him to eternity?

(2.) Self-examination is needful, in respect of the excellency of the sacrament. Let him eat *de illo pane, of that bread*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. that excellent bread, that consecrated bread, that bread which is not only the bread of the Lord, but the bread the Lord. Let him drink *de illo poculo, of that cup*; that precious cup which is perfumed and spiced with Christ's love; that cup which holds the blood of God sacramentally. *Cleopatra* put a jewel in a cup, which contained the price of a kingdom: this sacred cup we are to drink of, enriched with the blood of God, is above the price of a kingdom; it is more worth than heaven. Therefore coming to such a royal feast, having whole Christ, his divine and human nature to feed on, how should we examine ourselves before-hand, that we may be fit guests for such a magnificent banquet.

(3.) Self-examining is needful, because God will examine us. That was a sad question, *Matth. xxii. 12. Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?* Men are loth to ask themselves the question, *O my soul, art thou a fit guest for the Lord's table? are there not some sins thou hast to bewail? are there not some evidences for heaven that thou hast to get?* Now, when persons will not ask themselves the question, then God will bring such a question as this to them, how came ye in hither to my table not prepared? how came ye in hither with an unbelieving or profane heart? It will be such a question as will cause an heart-trembling. God will examine a man as the chief captain did *Paul*, with *scourging*, *Acts xxii. 24.* 'Tis true, the best faint, if God should weigh him in the balance, would be found defective: but, when a Christian hath made an impartial search, and hath laboured to deal uprightly between God and his own soul, Christ's merits will cast in some grains of allowance into the scales.

(4.) Self-examining is needful, because of that secret corruption in the heart, which will not be found out without searching. There are in the heart *plangendæ tenebræ*, Aug. *hidden pollutions*. It is with a Christian, as with *Joseph's* brethren, when the steward accused them

them of having the cup, they were ready to swear they had not the cup in their sack, but upon search it was found there: little doth a Christian think what pride, atheism, uncleanness is in his heart till he searcheth. Therefore, if there be such hidden wickedness, like a spring that runs under ground, we had need examine ourselves, that finding out our secret sin, we may be humbled and repent. Hidden sins, if not searched out, defile the soul. If cornly long in the chaff, the chaff defiles the corn; hidden sins layn long in, defile our duties. Needful therefore it is, before we come to the holy supper, to search out these hidden sins, as *Israel* searched for leaven before they came to the passover.

(3.) Self-examining is needful, because without it we may easily have a cheat put upon us, *Jer. xvii. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things.* Many a man's heart will tell him, he is fit for the Lord's table. As when Christ asked the sons of *Zebedee*, *Matth. xx. 22. Are ye able to drink the cup I shall drink of?* can ye drink such a bloody cup of suffering? they say unto him, *we are able.* So the heart will suggest to a man, he is fit to drink of the sacramental cup, he hath on the wedding-garment. *Grande profundum est homo, Aug. The heart is a grand impostor.* It is like a cheating tradesman, which will put one off with bad wares: the heart will put a man off with seeming grace, instead of saving. A tear or two shed is repentance, a few lazy desires is faith: blue and

red flowers that grow among the corn, look like good flowers, but they are but beautiful weeds. The foolish virgins lamps looked as if they had had oil in them, but they had none. Therefore, to prevent a cheat, that we may not take false grace instead of true, we had need make a thorow disquisition and search of our hearts before we come to the Lord's table.

(6.) Self-examining is needful, because of those false fears the godly are apt to nourish in their hearts, which make them go sad to the sacrament. As they who have no grace, for want of examining, presume; so they who have grace, for want of examining, are ready to despair. Many of God's children look upon themselves through the black spectacles of fear: they fear Christ is not formed in them, they fear they have no right to the promise; and these fears in the heart cause tears in the eye: whereas, would they but search and examine, they might find they had grace. Are not their hearts humbled for sin? and what is this but the bruised reed? do they not weep after the Lord? and what are these tears but seeds of faith? do they not thirst after Christ in an ordinance; what is this but the new creature crying for the breast? Here are, you see, seeds of grace; and, would Christians examine their hearts, they might see there is something of God in them, and so their false fears would be prevented, and they might approach with comfort to these holy mysteries in the eucharist.

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MARK XIV. 22. *Jesus took Bread, &c.*

(7.) SELF-EXAMINING is needful, in respect of the danger in coming unworthily without examination, *1 Cor. xi. 27. He shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Par-facit quasi Christum trucidaret, Grotius.---i. e. God reckons with him as with a crucifier of the Lord Jesus.* He doth not drink Christ's blood, but shed it; and so brings that curse upon him, as the *Jews*, *his blood be upon us and our children.* The virtue of Christ's blood nothing more comfortable, the guilt of it nothing more formidable.

4. We must examine ourselves before the sacrament, in respect of the difficulty of self-examining work. Difficulty raiseth a noble spi-

rit. Self-examining is difficult, (1.) Because it is an inward work, it lies most with the heart. *External acts of devotion* are easy; to lift up the eye, to bow the knee, to read over a few prayers; this is as easy, as for the papists to tell over a few beads: but to examine a man's self, to take the heart as a watch all in pieces, to make a scripture-trial of our fitness for the Lord's supper, this is not easy. Reflexive acts are hardest: the eye cannot see itself but by a glass; we must have the glass of the word and conscience to see our own hearts: it is easy to spy the faults of others, but it is hard to find out our own. (2.) Self-examination is difficult, in regard of self-love. As ignorance blinds,



blinds, so self-love flatters : what Solomon saith of love, *Prov. x. 12. Love covereth all sins*, is most true of self-love : a man looking upon himself in the glass of self-love (that flattering glass) his virtues appear greater than they are, and his sins lesser. Self-love makes a man rather *excuse* himself, than examine himself ; self-love makes one think the best of himself ; and he who hath a good opinion of himself, doth not suspect himself ; and not suspecting himself, he is not forward to examine himself. The work therefore of self-examination being so difficult, it requires the more impartiality and industry ; difficulty should be a spur to diligence.

(5.) We must examine ourselves before we come, because of the *beneficialness of self-examination*. The benefit is great, which way soever things turn ; if, upon examination, we find that we have no grace in truth, then the *mistake is discovered*, and the *danger prevented* ; if we find that we have grace, we may take the comfort of it. He who, upon search, finds that he hath the *minimum quod fit*, the least degree of grace, he is like one that hath found his box of evidences, he is an happy man, he is a fit guest at the Lord's table, he is heir to all the promises, he is as sure to go to heaven, as if he were in heaven already. These are the reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's table.

Qu. 5. *What must we examine ?*

Ans. (1.) Our *sins*. (2.) Our *graces*.

*First*, our *sins*. Search if any dead fly might spoil this sweet ointment. When we come to the sacrament, we should do as the *Jews* did before the passover ; they searched for leaven, and having found it did burn it. 1. Let us search for the leaven of pride ; this sours our holy things : we are born with a spiritual tympany. Will an humble Christ be received into a proud heart ? Pride keeps Christ out---*Intus existens prohibet alienum*---Pride swells the heart ; and Christ cannot come into the heart if it be full already. To a proud man Christ's blood hath no virtue ; 'tis like *discordium* put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth its virtue. Let us search for this leaven of pride, and cast it away. 2. Let us search for the leaven of avarice. The Lord's supper is a spiritual mystery, it represents Christ's body and blood ; what should an earthly heart do here ? The earth puts out the fire ; earthliness quencheth the fire of holy love. The earth is *elementum*

*gravissimum*, it cannot ascend. A soul belimed with earth cannot ascend to heavenly cogitations, *Col. iii. 5. Covetousness which is idolatry*. Will Christ come into that heart where there is an idol ? Search for this leaven before you come to this ordinance. How can an earthly heart converse with that God which is a spirit ? can a clod of earth kiss the sun ? 3. Search for the leaven of *hypocrisy*, Luke xii. 1. *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy*. Aquinas describes it *simulatio virtutis* : hypocrisy is a counterfeiting of virtue. The hypocrite is a living pageant, he only makes a show of religion : he gives God his knee, but no heart ; and God gives him bread and wine in the sacrament but no Christ. Oh let us search for this leaven of hypocrisy, and burn it !

*Secondly*, We must examine our *graces*. I shall instance only in one, our *knowledge* :

1. Whether we have knowledge.

2. Whether it be rightly qualified.

(1.) We are to examine whether we have knowledge, else we cannot give God a *reasonable service*, Rom. xii. 1. Knowledge is a necessary requisite in a communicant ; without knowledge there can be no fitness for the sacrament : a person cannot be fit to come to the Lord's table who hath no goodnefs, but without knowledge the *mind is not good*, Prov. xix. 2. Some say they have good hearts though they want knowledge ; as if one should say, his eye is good, but it wants sight. Under the law when the plague of leprosy was in a man's head, the priest was to pronounce him unclean. The ignorant person hath the plague in his head, he is unclean : ignorance is the womb of lust, 1 *Pet. i. 14*. Therefore it is requisite, before we come, to examine ourselves what knowledge we have in the main fundamentals of religion. Let it not be said of us, that *to this day the veil is upon our hearts*, 2 *Cor. iii. 15*. But sure, in this intelligent age, we cannot but have some insight into the mysteries of the Gospel. I rather fear, we are like *Rachel*, who was fair and well-sighted, but barren : therefore,

(2.) Let us examine whether our knowledge be rightly qualified. 1. Is it *influential* : doth our knowledge warm our heart ? *Claritas intellectu parit ardorem in affectu*. Saving knowledge doth not only direct, but quicken : 'tis the *light of life*, John viii. 12. 2. Is our knowledge *practical* ? We hear much ; do we *live* the

the truths we know? That is the right knowledge, which doth not only adorn the mind, but reform the life.

*Secondly*, This solemn preparing for the sacrament, as it consists in examining ourselves, so in dressing our souls before we come. And this soul-dress is in two things;

1. *Washing* in the laver of repenting tears: to come to this ordinance with the guilt of any sin unrepented of, makes way for the further hardning of our heart, and giving Satan fuller possession of us, *Zech. xii. 10. They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him.* The cloud of sorrow must drop into tears. We must grieve as for the *pollution*, so for the *unkindness* in every sin. To sin against Christ's love who died for us. When *Peter* thought of Christ's love, who called him out of his unregeneracy, made him an apostle, and carried him up to the mount of transfiguration, where he saw the glory of heaven in a vision; and then, to think of his denying Christ, it broke his heart, *he wept bitterly*, *Matth. xxvi. 75.* To think, before we come to a sacrament, of the sins against the bowels-mercies of God the Father, the bleeding wounds of God the Son, the blessed inspirations of God the Holy Ghost; it is enough to broach our eyes with tears, and put us into an holy agony of grief and compunction. And we must be so distressed for sin, as to be divorced from sin. The serpent, before he drinks, casts up his poison: in this, we must be wise as serpents; before we drink of the sacramental cup, we must cast up the poison of sin by repentance. *Ille vera plangit commissa, qui non committit plangenda*, *Aug.*—He doth truly bewail the sins he hath committed, who doth not commit the sins he hath bewailed. And this is the dressing our souls before we come, washing in the waters of true repentance.

2. The soul-dress is the exciting and stirring up the habit of grace into a lively exercise, *2 Tim. i. 6. I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, i. e. the gifts and graces of the Spirit.* The *Greek* word to *stir up* signifies to blow up grace into a flame. Grace is oft like fire in the embers, which needs no blowing up: it is possible that even a good man may not come so well disposed to this ordinance, because he hath not before taken pains with his heart to come in due order, he hath not stirred up grace into its vigorous exercise; and so, though he doth not eat

and drink damnation, yet he doth not receive consolation in the sacrament. Thus you see what this dressing of our souls is, before we come.

*Thirdly*, This solemn preparing for the sacrament is, in begging a blessing upon the ordinance. The sacrament is not like physic, which hath an inherent operative virtue: no, but the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the co-operation of the Spirit, and a word of *blessing*. In the institution, Christ blessed the elements; *Jesus took bread and blessed it*, in the text. The sacrament will no further do us good, than as it is blessed to us. We ought then, before we come, to pray for a blessing on the ordinance, that the sacrament may be not only a sign to represent, but a seal to confirm, and an instrument to convey Christ and all his benefits to us. We are to pray, that this great ordinance may be *poison* to our sins, and *food* to our graces. That, as it was with *Jonathan*, when he had tasted the honey-comb, his eyes were enlightened, *1 Sam. xiv. 27.* so that by our receiving this holy eucharist, our eyes may be so enlightened, as to *discern the Lord's body*. Thus should we implore a blessing upon the ordinance, before we come. The sacrament is like a tree hung full of fruit; but none of this fruit will fall, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

(2.) That the sacrament may be *effectual* to us, as there must be a *due preparing* for it, so a right *partaking* of it: which right participation of the sacrament is in three things.

1. When we draw nigh to God's table in an *humble sense* of our *unworthiness*. We do not deserve one *crumb* of the bread of life; we are poor indigent creatures, who have lost our glory, and are like a vessel that is ship-wrecked: we smite on our breasts, as the *Publican*, *God be merciful to us sinners.* This is a right partaking of the ordinance; 'tis part of our worthiness to see our unworthiness.

2. We rightly *partake* of the sacrament, when at the Lord's table we are filled with anhelations of soul, and inflamed desires after Christ, and nothing can quench our thirst but his blood, *Mat. v. 6. Blessed are they that thirst.* They are blessed not only when they are filled, but while they are thirsting.

3. A right participation of the supper is, when they receive in *faith*. Without faith we get no good: what is said of the word preached, *It profiteth not, not being mixed with faith*,  
Heb.



Heb. iv. 2. is as true of the sacrament. Christ turned stones into bread; unbelief turns the bread into stones, that it doth not nourish. Then we partake aright, when we come in faith: faith hath a twofold act, an *adhering*, and an *applying*: by the *first* act we go over to Christ, by the *second* act we bring Christ over to us, *Gal. ii. 20.* This is the great grace we must set a-work, *Acts x. 43.* *Philo* calls it, *fides oculata*: faith is the eagle-eye that discerns the Lord's body; faith causeth a virtual contact, it toucheth Christ. Christ said to *Mary*, *Touch me not*, &c. *John xx. 17.* She was not to touch him with the hands of her body; but he faith to us, *Touch me*, touch me with the hand of your faith. Faith makes Christ present to the soul; the believer hath a *real* presence in the sacrament. The body of the sun is in the firmament, but the light of the sun is in the eye: *Christ's* essence is in heaven, but he is in a believer's heart by his light and influence, *Eph. iii. 17.* *That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.* Faith is the palate which tastes *Christ*, *1 Pet. ii. 3.* Faith makes a concoction; it causeth the bread of life to nourish. *Crede & manducasti*, *Aug.* Faith causeth a coalition, it makes us *one* with Christ, *Eph. i. 23.* Other graces make us *like* Christ, faith makes us *members* of Christ.

*Fourthly*, Then we partake a-right of the sacrament, when we receive in *love*.

(1.) *Love to Christ.* Who can see *Christ* pierced with a crown of thorns, sweating in his agony, bleeding on the cross, but his heart must needs be endeared in love to him? *How can we but love him who hath given his life a ransom for us?* Love is the special wine and juice of the pomegranate which we must give Christ, *Cant. viii. 2.* Our love to this superior and blessed Jesus must exceed our love to other things; as the oil runs above the water. Tho' we cannot with *Mary* bring our costly ointment to anoint Christ's body, yet we do more than this, when we bring him our love, which is sweeter to him than all ointments and perfumes.

(2.) *Love to the saints.* This is a love-feast: tho' we must eat this supper with the bitter herbs of repentance, yet not with the bitter herbs of malice. Were it not sad, if all the meat one eats should turn to bad humours? He who comes in malice to the Lord's table, all he eats is to his hurt: *He eats and drinks damnation to himself*, *1 Cor. xi. 29.*—*Come in love.* It is

with love as it is with fire; you keep fire all the day upon the hearth, but upon special occasions you draw out the fire larger; so, though we must have love to all; yet to the saints, who are our fellow-members, here we must draw out the fire of our love larger; and we must show the largeness of our affections to them by prizing their persons, by choosing their company, by doing all offices of love to them, counselling them in their doubts, comforting them in their fears, supplying them in their wants. Thus one Christian may be an *Ebenezer* to another, and as an angel of God to him: the sacrament cannot be effectual to him who doth not receive in love. If a man drinks poison, and then takes a cordial, the cordial will do him little good; he who hath the poison of malice in his soul, the cordial of Christ's blood will do him no good; come therefore in love and charity. And thus we see how we may receive the supper of the Lord, that it may be effectual to our salvation.

*Use 1.* From the whole doctrine of the sacrament, learn, how precious should a sacrament be to us. It is a sealed deed to make over the blessings of the new covenant to us, [justification, sanctification, glory.] A small piece of wax put to a parchment is made the instrument to confirm a rich conveyance or lordship to another; so these elements in the sacrament of bread and wine, though in themselves of no great value, yet being consecrated to be seals to confirm the covenant of grace to us, so they are of more value than all the riches of the *Indies*.

*Use 2.* The sacrament being such an holy mystery, let us come to this holy mystery with holy hearts. There is no receiving a crucified Christ, but into a consecrated heart: Christ, in his conception, lay in a pure virgin's womb, and, at his death, his body was wrapped in clean linen, and put in a new virgin-tomb, never yet defiled with rottenness. If Christ would not ly in an unclean grave, sure he will not be received into an unclean heart, *Isa. lii. 11.* *Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.* If they who did carry the vessels of the Lord were to be holy, then they who are to be the vessels of the Lord, and are to hold Christ's body and blood, ought to be holy.

*Use 3. Consolation.* Christ's body and blood in the sacrament is a most sovereign elixir, or comfort to a distressed soul. Christ having poured out his blood, now God's justice is fully

fully satisfied. There is in the death of *Christ* enough to answer all doubts. What if sin is the poison, here is the flesh of *Christ* an antidote against it? What if sin be red as scarlet, is not *Christ's* blood of a deeper colour, and can wash away sin? If Satan strikes us with his darts of temptation, here is a precious balm comes out of *Christ's* wounds to heal us, *Isa.*

liii. 5. What though we feed upon the bread of affliction, as long as in the sacrament we feed upon the bread of life? So that *Christ* received aright sacramentally, is an universal medicine for the healing, and an universal cordial for the cheering of our distressed souls.

III. The benefits of our redemption are applied to us by prayer.

## OF PRAYER.

PSALM cix. 4. *But I give myself to prayer.*

**I** Shall not expatiate upon prayer at large, being to speak more fully to it in the *Lord's* prayer. But to the words, *I give myself to prayer.* It is one thing to pray, and another thing to be given to prayer; he who prays frequently, is said to be given to prayer; as he who often distributes alms, is said to be given to charity. Prayer is a glorious ordinance, it is the soul's trading with heaven: God comes down to us by his spirit, and we go up to him by prayer.

Qu. 1. *What is prayer?*

Ans. "It is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of *Christ*."

I. *Prayer is an offering up of our desires.* Therefore it is called a making known of our requests, *Phil.* iv. 6. In prayer we come as humble petitioners, begging to have our suit granted.

II. *'Tis offering up of our desires to God.* prayer is not to be made to any but God. The papists pray to saints and angels, but they know not our grievances, *Is.* lxiii. 16. *Abraham is ignorant of us.* And all angel-worship is forbidden, *Col.* ii. 18, 19. We must not pray to any but whom we may believe in, *Rom.* x. 14. *How shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?* But we cannot believe in an angel, therefore we must not pray to him.

Qu. *Why must prayer be made only to God?*

Ans. 1. Because he only hears prayer, *Pf.* lxxv. 2. *O thou that hearest prayer.* Hereby God is known to be the true God, in that he hears prayer, 1 *Kings* xviii. 37. *Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that the people may know that thou art the Lord God.*

2. Because God only can help. We may

look to second causes, and cry, as the woman did, 2 *Kings* vi. 26. *Help, my Lord, O king. And he said if the Lord doth not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* If we are in outward distress, God must send from heaven and save; if we are in inward agonies, he only can pour in the oil of joy; therefore prayer is to be made to him only.

III. *For things agreeable to his will.* When we pray for outward things, for riches or children, perhaps God sees these things are not good for us; our prayers must comport with God's will. We may pray absolutely for grace; *for this is the will of God, our sanctification,* 1 *Thess.* iv. 3. There might be no strange incense offered, *Exod.* xxx. 9. When we pray for things which are not agreeable to God's will, it is offering strange incense.

IV. *In the name of Christ.* To pray in the name of *Christ*, is not only to mention *Christ's* name in prayer, but to pray in the hope and confidence of *Christ's* merits, 1 *Sam.* vii. 9. *Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it, &c.* We must carry the lamb *Christ* in the arms of our faith, and so we prevail in prayer. When *Uzziah* would offer incense without a priest, God was angry, and struck him with leprosy, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 16. When we do not pray in *Christ's* name, in the hope of his mediation, we offer up incense, without a priest; and what can we expect but to meet with rebukes, and to have God answer us by terrible things?

Qu. 2. *What are the parts of prayer?*

Ans. 1. There is the confessional part, which is the acknowledgment of sin. 2. The supplicatory part, when we either deprecate and pray against some evil, or request the obtaining of



some good. 3. The gratulatory part, when we give thanks for mercies received, which is the most excellent part of prayer. In petition we act like men, in giving of thanks, we act like angels.

Qu. 3. *What are the several sorts of prayer?*

Ans. 1. There is mental prayer, in the mind, 1 Sam. i. 13. 2dly, Vocal, Ps. lxxvii. 1. 3dly, Ejaculatory, which is a sudden and short elevation of the heart to God, Neh. ii. 4. *So I prayed to the God of heaven.* 4thly, Conceived prayer; when we pray for those things which God puts into our heart, Rom. viii. 26. *The spirit helps us with sighs and groans.* Both the expressions of the tongue, so far as they are right, and the impressions of the heart, are from the Spirit. 5thly, prescribed prayer: our saviour hath set us a pattern of prayer. God prescribed a set form of blessing for the priests, Numb. vi. 23. 6thly, Public prayer; when we pray in the audience of others. Prayer is more powerful, when many join and unite their forces. *Vis unita fortior*, Matth. xviii. 19. 7thly, Private prayer; when we pray by ourselves, Matth. vi. 6. *Enter into thy closet.*

Qu. 4. *What is that prayer which is most like to prevail with God?*

Ans. When prayer is rightly qualified. That is a good medicine which hath the right ingredients; that prayer is good, and is most like to prevail with God, which hath these seven ingredients in it:

(1.) Prayer must be mixed with faith, James i. 6. *But let him pray in faith.* Believe God hears, and will in his due time grant; believe God's love and truth. Believe that he is love, therefore will not deny you; believe that he is truth, therefore will not deny himself. *Faith sets prayer a-work.* Faith is to prayer, as the feather is to the arrow, faith feathers the arrow of prayer, and makes it fly swifter, and pierce the throne of grace. Prayer that is faithless is fruitless.

(2.) A melting prayer, Ps. li. 17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken heart.* The incense was to be beaten, to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer. O, faith a Christian, I cannot pray with such gifts and elocution as others; as Moses said, *I am not eloquent*: but canst thou weep? Doth thy heart melt in prayer? Weeping prayer prevails. Tears drop as pearls from the eye. *Jacob wept and made supplication; and had power over the angel*, Hosea xii. 4.

(3.) Prayer must be fired with zeal and fer-

veny, James v. 16. *Effectual fervent prayer prevails much.* Cold prayers, like cold suiters, never speed. Prayer, without fervency, is like a sacrifice without fire. Prayer is called a *pouring out of the soul*, 1 Sam. i. 15. to signify vehemency. Formality starves prayer. Prayer is compared to incense, Ps. cxli. 2. *Let my prayer be set forth as incense.* Hot coals were to be put to the incense, to make it odoriferous and fragrant: fervency of affection is like coals put to the incense; it makes prayer ascend as a sweet perfume. Christ prayed with strong cries, Heb. v. 7. *Gloriam iste penetrat nubes*, Luther. Fervent prayer, like a petard set against heaven's gates, makes them fly open. To cause holy fervour and ardency of soul in prayer, consider, 1. Prayer without fervency, is no prayer; it is speaking not praying: lifeless prayer is no more prayer, than the picture of a man is a man. One may say, as Pharaoh, Gen. 41. *I have dreamed a dream*: It is dreaming, not praying. Life and fervency baptizeth a duty, and gives it a name. 2. Consider in what need we stand of those things which we ask in prayer. We come to ask the favour of God; and if we have not his love, all we enjoy is cursed to us. We pray that our souls may be washed in Christ's blood; and if he wash us not we have no part in him, John xiii. 8. When will we be in earnest, if not when we are praying for the life of our souls? 3. It is only fervent prayer hath the promise of mercy affixed to it, Jer. xxix. 14. *Then shall ye find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.* It is dead praying without a promise; and the promise is made only to ardency. The *Aediles*, among the Romans, had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them: God's heart is ever open to fervent prayer.

(4.) Prayer must be sincere. Sincerity is the silver thread which must run through the whole duties of religion. Sincerity in prayer is, when we have gracious holy ends in prayer; our prayer is not so much for temporal mercies as spiritual. We send out our prayer, as a merchant sends out his ship, that we may have large returns of spiritual blessings: our aim in prayer is, that our heart may be more holy, that we may have more communion with God; our design is, that by prayer we may increase the stock of grace. Prayer which wants a good aim, wants a good issue.

(5.) Prayer that will prevail with God, must have fixation of mind, Ps. lvii. 7. *O God, my heart*

*heart is fixed.* Since the fall, the mind is like quick-silver, which will not fix, it hath *principium motus*, but *non quietis*: the thoughts will be roving and dancing up and down in prayer; just as if a man that is travelling to such a place, should run out of the road, and wander he knows not whither. In prayer we are travelling to the throne of grace, but how often do we by vain cogitations, turn out of the road? Which is rather wandring than praying.

Qu. *But how shall we cure these vain impertinent thoughts, which do so distract us in prayer, and, we may fear, hinder the acceptance?*

Ans. 1. Be very apprehensive in prayer of the infiniteness of God's majesty and purity. God's eye is upon us in prayer, and we may say, as *David*, Ps. lvi. 8. *Thou tellest my wanderings.* The thoughts of this would make us *hoc agere*, mind the duty we are about. If a man were to deliver a petition to an earthly prince, would he at that time be playing with a feather? Set yourselves, when you pray, as in God's presence: could you but look through the key-hole of heaven, and see how devout and intent the angels are in their worshipping of God, sure you would be ready to blush at your vain thoughts and vile impertinences in prayer.

2. If you would keep your mind fixed in prayer, keep your eye fixed, Ps. cxxiii. 1. *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.* Much vanity comes in at the eye. When the eye wanders in prayer, the heart wanders. To think to keep the heart fixed in prayer, and yet let the eye gaze, is as if one should think to keep his house safe, yet let the windows be open.

3. If you would have your thoughts fixed in prayer, get more love to God. Love is a great fixer of the thoughts. He who is in love, cannot keep his thoughts off the object. He who loves the world, his thoughts run undisturbedly upon the world. Did we love God more, our minds would be more intent upon him in prayer. Were there more delight in duty, there would be less distraction.

4. Implore the help of God's spirit to fix our minds, and make them intent and serious in prayer. The ship without a pilot rather floats than sails; that our thoughts do not float up and down in prayer, we need the blessed spirit to be our pilot to steer us; only God's spirit can bound the thoughts. A shaking hand may as well write a line steadily, as we can keep

our hearts fixed in prayer without the spirit of God.

5. Make holy thoughts familiar to you in your ordinary course of life. *David* was oft musing on God, Ps. cxxxix. 18. *When I am awake, I am still with thee.* He who gives himself liberty to have vain thoughts out of prayer, will scarce have other thoughts in prayer.

6. If you would keep your mind fixed on God, watch your hearts; not only watch them after prayer, but in prayer. The heart will be apt to give you the slip and have a thousand vagaries in prayer. We read of angels *ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder*: so, in prayer, you shall find your hearts ascending to heaven, and in a moment descending upon earthly objects. O Christians, watch your hearts in prayer. What a shame is it to think, that when we are speaking to God in prayer, our hearts should be in the fields, or in our counting-house, or one way or other, running upon the devil's errand?

7. Labour for more degrees of grace. The more ballast the ship hath, the better it sails; so the more the heart is ballasted with grace the steadier it will sail to heaven in prayer.

8. Prayer that is likely to prevail with God, must be argumentative: God loves to have us plead with him, and use arguments in prayer. See how many arguments *Jacob* used in prayer, Gen. xxxii. 11. *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother.* The arguments he used, are, 1. From God's command, v. 7. *Thou saidst to me, return to thy country*: as if he had said, I did not take this journey of my own head, but by thy direction; therefore thou canst not but in honour protect me. And he useth another argument, v. 12. *Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.* Lord, wilt thou go back from thy own promise? Thus he was argumentative in prayer; and he got not only a new blessing, but a new name. Ver. 8. *Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou had power with God, and prevailed.* God loves to be overcome with strength of argument. Thus, when we come to God in prayer for grace, be argumentative: Lord, thou callest thyself the God of all grace; and whither should we go with our vessel, but to the fountain? Lord, thy grace may be imparted, yet not impaired: hath not Christ purchased grace for poor, indigent creatures? Every drachm



of grace cost a drop of blood. Shall Christ die to purchase grace for us, and shall not we have the fruit of his purchase? Lord, it is thy delight to milk out the breast of mercy and grace, and wilt thou abridge thyself of thy own delight? Thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to implant grace; can truth lie? can faithfulness deceive? God loves thus to be overcome with arguments in prayer.

(7.) Prayer that would prevail with God, must be joined with reformation, *Job xi. 13. If thou stretch out thy hands towards him; if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away from thee.* Sin, lived in, makes the heart hard, and God's ear deaf. 'Tis foolish to pray against sin, and then sin against prayer, sin fly-blows our prayers, *Pf. lxvi. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* The loadstone loseth its virtue when bespread with garlick; so doth prayer when polluted with sin. The incense of prayer must be offered upon an holy heart.

Thus you see what is that prayer which is most likely to prevail with God.

Use I. It reproves, 1. Such as pray not at all: 'Tis made the note of a reprobate, he calls not upon God, *Pf. cxliv.* Doth he think to have an alms, who never asks it? do they think to have mercy from God, who never seek it? Then God should befriend them more than he did his own Son, *Heb. v. 7.* Christ offered up prayers with strong cries. None of God's children are born dumb, *Gal. iv. 6.*

(2.) It reproves such as have left off prayer, a sign they never felt the fruit and comfort of it. He that leaves off prayer, a sign he leaves off to fear God, *Job xv. 4. Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.* A man that hath left off prayer, is fit for any wickedness. When *Saul* had given over enquiring after God, then he went to the witch at *Endor*.

Use 2. Of exhortation. Be persons given to prayer. *I give myself* (saith *David*) *to prayer.* Pray for pardon and purity; prayer is the golden key that opens heaven. The tree of the promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. All the benefits of Christ's redemption are handed over to us by

prayer.

Obj. *But I have prayed a long time for mercy, and have no answer, Pf. lxiii. 3.* I am weary of crying.

Ans. 1. God may hear us, when we do not hear from him: as soon as prayer is made, God hears it, though he doth not presently answer. A friend may receive our letter, tho' he doth not presently send us an answer of it. 2. God may delay prayer, yet not deny.

Qu. *But why doth God delay an answer of prayer?*

Ans. 1. Because he loves to hear the voice of prayer, *Pray. xv. 8. The prayer of the upright is his delight.* You let the musician play a great while ere you throw him down money, because you love to hear his music, *Cant. ii. 14.*

2. God may delay prayer when he will not deny, that he may humble us; perhaps God hath spoke to us a long time in his word to leave such sins, but we would not hear him; therefore he lets us speak to him in prayer and seems not to hear us.

3. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, because he sees we are not yet fit for the mercy; perhaps we pray for deliverance, we are not fit for it; our scum is not yet boiled away; we would have God swift to deliver, and we are slow to repent.

4. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, that the mercy we pray for may be the more prized, and may be sweeter when it comes. The longer the merchant's ships stay abroad, the more he rejoiceth when they come home laden with spices and jewels; therefore be not discouraged, but follow God with prayer: though God may delay, he will not deny. *Prayer vincit invincibilem*, it overcomes the Omnipotent, *Hos. xii. 4.* The *Tymans* tied fast their god *Hercules* with a golden chain, that he should not remove: the Lord was held by *Moses's* prayer, as with a golden chain, *Exod. xxxii. 10.* *Let me alone*: why, what did *Moses*; he only prayed. Prayer ushers in mercy. Be thy case never so sad, if thou canst but pray, thou needst not fear, *Pf. x. 17.* Therefore give thyself to prayer.

## OF THE PREFACE TO THE LORD'S PRAYER.

*Our FATHER which art in Heaven.*

HAVING (through the good providence of God) gone over the chief grounds and fundamentals of religion, and enlarged upon the decalogue or ten commandments, I shall now, at the close, speak something upon the Lord's prayer.

MATTH. vi. 9. *After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed, &c.*

In this scripture are two things observable,

1. The introduction to the prayer,
2. The prayer itself which consists of three parts. (1.) *A preface.* (2.) *Petitions.* (3.) *The conclusion.*

1. The introduction to the Lord's prayer, *After this manner pray ye.* Our Lord Jesus, in these words, prescribed to his disciples and us a directory for prayer. The ten commandments are the rule of our life; the creed is the sum of our faith, and the Lord's prayer is the pattern of our prayer. As God did prescribe *Moses* a pattern of the tabernacle, *Exod. xxv.* 9. so Christ hath here prescribed us a pattern of prayer, *After this manner pray ye, &c.* The meaning is, let this be the rule and model according to which ye frame your prayers. *Ad hanc regulam preces nostras exigere necesse est,* Calvin. Not that we are tyed to the words of the Lord's prayer: Christ saith not, *After these words, pray ye*; but *After this manner*; that is, let all your petitions agree and symbolize with the things contained in the Lord's prayer: and indeed, well may we make all our prayers consonant and agreeable to this prayer, it being a most exact prayer. *Tertullian* calls it, *Breviarium totius evangelii*, a breviary and compendium of the gospel: it is like an heap of massy gold. The exactness of this prayer appears, 1. In the dignity of the Author: a piece of work hath commendation from the artificer, and this prayer hath commendation from the Author; it is the Lord's prayer. As the law moral was written with the finger of God, so this prayer was dropt from the lips of the Son of God. *Non vox hominem sonat, est Deus.*

2. The exactness of this prayer appears in the excellency of the matter. I may say of this prayer, it is *as silver tried in the furnace, purified seven times*, Ps. xii. 6. Never was there prayer so admirably and curiously composed as this. As *Solomon's song*, for its excellency, is called *The song of songs*; so may this well be called the prayer of prayers. The matter of it is admirable, 1. For its *succinctness*, 'tis short and pithy, *multum in parvo*, a great deal said in a few words. It requires more art to draw the two globes curiously in a little map. This short prayer is a system or body of divinity. 2. Its *clearness*. This prayer is plain and intelligible to every capacity. *Clearness* is the grace of speech. 3. Its *compleateness*. This prayer contains in it the chief thing that we have to ask, or God hath to bestow.

*Use.* Let us have a great esteem of the Lord's prayer: let it be the model and pattern of all our prayers. There is a double benefit ariseth from framing our petitions suitably to the Lord's prayer. 1. Hereby error in prayer is prevented: 'tis not easy to write wrong after this copy; we cannot easily err, having our pattern before us. 2. Hereby mercies requested are obtained: for the apostle assures us, God will hear us, when we pray according to his will, 1 John v. 14. And sure we pray according to his will, when we pray according to his pattern he hath set us. So much for the introduction to the Lord's prayer, *After this manner pray ye.*

II. The prayer itself, which consists of three parts. (1.) *A preface.* (2.) *Petitions.* (3.) *The conclusion.*

First, The preface to the prayer: (1.) *Our Father.* (2.) *Which art in heaven.* To begin with the first words of the preface.

*Our Father*] Father is sometimes taken personally, *John xiv. 28.* *My Father is greater than I*: but Father in the text is taken essentially for the whole Deity. This title, *Father*, teacheth us to whom we must address ourselves in prayer; to God alone. Here is no such thing in the Lord's prayer, as, O ye saints or angels that



that are in heaven, hear us; but, *Our Father which art in heaven.*

Qu. *In what order must we direct our prayers to God? Here is only the Father named; may not we direct our prayers to the Son, and Holy Ghost?*

Ans. Though the Father only be named in the Lord's prayer, yet the other two Persons are not hereby excluded: the Father is mentioned because he is first in order; but the Son and Holy Ghost are included, because they are the same in essence. As all the three persons subsist in one Godhead; so, in our prayers, tho' we name but one Person, we must pray to all. To come then more closely to the first words of the preface, [*Our Father.*] Princes on earth give themselves titles expressing their greatness, as *High and Mighty*: God might have done so, and expressed himself thus, *Our King of glory, our Judge*; but he gives himself another title, *Our Father*, an expression of love and condescension. God, that he might encourage us to pray to him, represents himself under this sweet notion of a *Father, Our Father. Dulce nomen Patris.* The name *Jehovah* carries majesty in it, the name *Father* carries mercy in it.

Qu. 1. *In what sense is God a Father?*

Ans. 1. By creation; it is he that hath made us, *Acts xvii. 28. We are his off-spring,* *Mal. ii. 10. Have we not all one Father?* Hath not one God created us? but there is little comfort in this; for so God is Father to the devils by creation; but he that made them will not save them.

2. God is a Father by election, having chosen a certain number to be his children, whom he will entail heaven upon, *Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us in him.*

3. God is a Father by special grace; he consecrates the elect by his Spirit, and infuseth a supernatural principle of holiness, therefore they are said to be born of God, *1 John iii. 9.* Such only as are sanctified can say, *Our Father which art in heaven.*

Qu. 2. *What is the difference between God being the Father of Christ, and the Father of the elect?*

Ans. God is the Father of Christ in a more glorious transcendent manner. Christ hath the primogeniture; he is the eldest Son, a Son by eternal generation, *Prov. viii. 23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.* *Isa. liii. 8. Who shall declare his*

*generation?* Christ is a Son to the Father; yet so as he is of the same nature with the Father, having all the incommunicable properties of the Godhead belonging to him: but we are sons of God by adoption and grace, *Gal. iv. 5. That we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Qu. 3. *What is that which makes God our Father?*

Ans. Faith: *Gal. iii. 26. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* An unbeliever may call God his Creator, and his Judge, but not his Father. Faith doth legitimate us, and make us of the blood-royal of heaven: *Ye are the children of God by faith.* Baptism makes us church-members, but faith makes us children: without faith the devil can show us as good a coat of arms as we.

Qu. 4. *How doth faith make God to be our Father?*

Ans. As faith is an uniting grace; by faith we have coalition and union with Christ and so the kindred comes in; being united to Christ, the natural Son, we become adopted sons: God is the Father of Christ; faith makes us Christ's brethren, *Heb. ii. 11.* and so God comes to be our Father.

Qu. 5. *Wherein doth it appear that God is the best Father?*

Ans. 1. In that he is most antient, *Dan. vii. 9. The Antient of Days did sit.* A figurative representation of God who was before all time: this may cause veneration.

2. God is the best Father, because he is perfect, *Matth. v. 48. Your Father which is in heaven is perfect*; he is perfectly good. Earthly fathers are subject to infirmities: *Elias* (tho' a prophet) *was a man of like passions,* *Jam. v. 17.* but God is perfectly good. All the perfection we can arrive at in this life is sincerity: we may a little resemble God, but not equal him; he is infinitely perfect.

3. God is the best Father, in respect of wisdom, *1 Tim. i. 17. The only wise God.* He hath a perfect idea of wisdom in himself: he knows the fittest means to bring about his own designs; the angels light at his lamp. In particular, this is one branch of his wisdom, that he knows what is best for us. An earthly parent knows not, in some intricate cases, how to advise his child, or what may be best for him to do: but God is a most wise Father, he knows what is best for us, he knows what comfort is best for us; he keeps his cordials for fainting, *2 Cor. vii. 6. God who comforteth them that are*

are cast down: he knows when affliction is best for us, and when it is fit to give a bitter potion, 1 Pet. i. 6. *If need be, ye are in heaviness.* He is the only wise God; he knows how to make evil things work for good to his children, Rom. viii. 28. He can make a sovereign treacle of poison: thus he is the best Father for wisdom.

4. He is the best Father, because the most loving, John iv. 16. *God is love.* He who causeth bowels of affection in others, must needs have more bowels himself; *quod efficit tale*: the affections in parents are but marble and adamant, in comparison of God's love to his children; he gives them the cream of his love, electing love, saving love, Zeph. iii. 17. *He will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing*: no father like God for love; if thou art his child, thou canst not love thy own soul so intirely as he loves thee.

5. God is the best Father, for riches; God hath land enough to give to all his children, he hath unssearchable riches, Eph. iii. 8. He gives the hidden manna, the tree of life, rivers of joy, gates of pearl: who ever saw gates of pearl? God hath treasures that cannot be emptied, pleasures that cannot be ended. Earthly fathers, if they should be ever giving, they would have nothing left to give: God is ever giving to his children, yet hath not the less; his riches are imparted, not impaired: like the sun that still shines, yet hath not the less light. He cannot be poor who is infinite. Thus God is the best Father; he gives more to his children, than any father or prince can bestow.

6. God is the best Father, because he can reform his children. A father, when his son takes bad courses, knows not how to make him better: but God knows how to make the children of the election better; he can change their hearts. When Paul was breathing out persecution against the saints, God soon altered his course, and set him a-praying, Acts ix. 11. *Behold, he prayeth.* None of those who belong to the election are so rough-cast and unhewn, but God can polish them with his grace, and make them fit for the inheritance.

7. God is the best Father, because he never dies, 1 Tim. vi. 16. *Who only hath immortality.* Earthly fathers die, and their children are exposed to many injuries, but God lives for ever, Rev. i. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the last.* God's crown hath no successors.

Qu. 6. *Wherein lies the dignity of such as have God for their Father?*

Ans. They have greater honour than is conferred on the princes of the earth; they are precious in God's esteem, Isa. xliii. 4. *Since thou wast precious in my eyes, thou hast been honourable*; the wicked are dross, Ps. cxix. 119. and chaff, Ps. i. 4. but God numbers his children among his jewels, Mal. iii. 17. He writes all his childrens names in the book of life, Phil. iv. 9. *Whose names are in the book of life.* Among the Romans, the names of their senators were written down in a book, *patres conscripti*; God enrolls the names of his children, and will not blot their names out of the register, Rev. iii. 5. *I will not blot his name out of the book of life.* God will not be ashamed of his children, Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called your God.* One might think it were something below God, and he might disdain to father such children as are dust and sin mingled: but he is not ashamed to be called our God: and that we may see he is not ashamed of his children, he writes his own name upon them, Rev. iii. 12. *I will write upon him the name of my God*; that is, I will openly acknowledge him before all the angels to be my child; I will write my name upon him, as the son bears his father's name: what an honour and dignity is this?

2. God confers honourable titles upon his children: 1. He calls them the excellent of the earth, Ps. xvi. 2. or the magnificent, as Junius renders it. They must needs be excellent, who are *e regio sanguine nati*, of the blood-royal of heaven; they are the spiritual phenixes of the world, the glory of the creation. God calls his children his glory, Isa. xlii. 13. *Israel my glory.* God honours his children with the title of kings, Rev. i. 6. *And hath made us kings.* All God's children are kings; though they have not earthly kingdoms, yet, 1. They carry a kingdom about them, Luke xvii. 21. *The kingdom of God is within you*: grace is a kingdom set up in the hearts of God's children; they are kings to rule over their sins, to bind those kings in chains, Ps. cxlix. 8. 2. They are like kings; they have their *insignia regalia*, their ensigns of royalty and majesty. 1. They have their crown: in this life they are kings in a disguise; they are not known, therefore they are exposed to poverty and reproach; they are kings in disguise; 1 John iii. 2. *Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be.* Why, what shall we be? Every son of



of God shall have his crown of glory, 1 Pet. v. 4. and white robes, Rev. vi. 11. *Robes* signify dignity, and *white* signifies sanctity.

3. This is their honour who have God for their Father, they are all heirs; the youngest son is an heir. 1. God's children are heirs to the things of this life: God being their Father, they have the best title to earthly things, they have a sanctified right to them: though they have often the least share, yet they have the best right; and they have a blessing with what they have, *i. e.* God's love and favour. Others may have more of the venison, but God's children have more of the blessing: thus they are heirs to the things of this life. 2. They are heirs to the other world; *heirs of salvation*, Heb. i. 14. *Joint heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 7. They are co-sharers with Christ in glory. Among men commonly the eldest son carries away all, but God's children are all joint-heirs with Christ, they have a co-partnership with him in his riches. Hath Christ a place in the celestial mansions? so have the saints, John xiv. 2. *In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you.* Hath he his Father's love? so have they, Ps. cxlvi. 8. *John* xvii. 26. *That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them.* Doth Christ sit upon a throne? so do God's children, Rev. iii. 21. What an high honour is this?

4. God makes his children equal in honour to the angels, Luke xx. 36. *They are equal to the angels*: nay, those saints, who have God for their father, are in some sense superior to the angels; for Jesus Christ having taken our nature, *naturam nostram nobilitavit*, Aug. hath ennobled and honoured it above the angelical, Heb. ii. 16. God hath made his children, by adoption, nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are the friends of Christ, and this honour have all the saints. Thus you see the dignity of such as have God for their Father. What a comfort is this to God's children, who are here despised, and loaded with calumnies and invectives? 4. 14. *We are made as the filth of the world, &c.* But God will put honour upon his children at the last day, and crown them with immortal bliss, to the envy of their adversaries.

Qy. 7. *How may we know that God is our Father?* All cannot say, our Father: the Jews boasted that God was their Father, John viii. 59. We have one Father, even God. *Christ* tells them their pedigree, v. 44. Ye are of your

father the devil. *They who are of satanical spirits, and make use of their power to beat down the power of Godliness, cannot say, God is their Father: they may say, our father which art in hell: Well then, how may we know that God is our Father?*

Ans. (1.) By having a filial disposition: this is seen in four things, 1. To melt in tears for sin: a child weeps for offending his father. When Christ looked on *Peter*, and he remembered his sin in denying Christ, he fell a-weeping. *Clemens Alexandrinus* reports of *Peter*, he never heard a cock crow, but he wept. This is a sign that God is our Father; when the heart of stone is taken away, and there is a gracious thaw in the heart; it melts in tears for sin; and he who hath a child-like heart, mourns for sin in a spiritual manner, as it is sin: he grieves for it, 1. As it is an act of pollution. Sin deflowers the virgin-soul; it defaceth God's image; it turns beauty into deformity; 'tis called the *plague of the heart*, 1 Kings viii. 38. It is the spirits of evil distilled. A child of God mourns for the defilement of sin; sin hath a blacker aspect than hell. 2. He who hath a child-like heart, grieves for sin, as it is an act of enmity. Sin is diametrically opposite to God. It is called a walking contrary to God, Lev. xxvi. 40. *If they shall confess their iniquity, and that they have walked contrary to me.* Sin doth all it can to spight God; if God be of one mind, sin will be of another: sin would not only unthrone God, but it strikes at his very being; if sin could help it, God should be no longer God. A child-like heart grieves for this; O, saith he, that I should have so much enmity in me, that my will should be no more subdued to the will of my heavenly Father! This springs a leak of godly sorrow. 3. A child-like heart weeps for sin, as it is an act of ingratitude: sin is an abuse of God's love; it is taking the jewels of God's mercies, and making use of them to sin: God hath done more for his children than others; he hath planted his grace, and given them some intimations of his favour: and to sin against kindness, dyes a sin in-grain, and makes it crimson: like *Absalom*, who, as soon as his father kissed him, and took him into favour, plotted treason against him: nothing so melts a child-like heart in tears, as sins of unkindness: O that I should sin against the blood of a Saviour, and the bowels of a Father! I condemn ingratitude in my child, yet I am guilty of ingratitude against my heavenly

heavenly Father : this opens a vein of godly sorrow, and makes the heart bleed afresh : certainly this evidenceth God to be our Father, when he hath given us this child-like frame of heart, to weep for sin as it is sin, an act of pollution, enmity, ingratitude : a wicked man may mourn for the bitter fruit of sin, but only a child of God can grieve for the odious nature of sin. (2.) A filial (or child-like) disposition is to be full of sympathy : we lay to heart the dishonours reflected upon our heavenly Father ; when we see God's worship adulterated, his truth mingled with the poison of error, it is as a sword in our bones to see God's glory suffer, *Pf. cxix. 158. I beheld the transgressors and was grieved : Homer* describing *Agamemnon's* grief, when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter *Iphigenia*, brings in all his friends weeping and condoling with him ; so, when God is dishonoured, we sympathize, and are as it were clad in mourning. A child that hath any good nature, is cut to the heart to hear his father reproached : an heir of heaven takes a dishonour done to God more heinous than a disgrace done to himself.

(3.) A filial disposition, is to love our heavenly Father ; he is unnatural that doth not love his father. God, who is crowned with excellency, is the proper object of delight ; and every true child of God saith, as *Peter, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* But who will not say he loves God ? if ours be a true genuine love to our heavenly Father, it may be known, *1st.* By the effects : 1. Then we have an holy fear ; there is a fear which ariseth from love to God, that is, we fear the loss of the visible tokens of God's presence, *1 Sam. iv. 13. Eli's heart trembled for the ark.* It is not said his heart trembled for his two sons *Hophni* and *Phineas* ; but his heart trembled for the ark, because the ark was the special sign of God's presence ; and if that were taken, the glory was departed. He who loves his heavenly father, fears lest the tokens of his presence should be removed, lest prophaneness should break in like a flood, lest *popery* should get head, and God should go from a people : the presence of God in his ordinances is the glory and strength of a nation. The *Trojans* had the image of *Pallas*, and they had an opinion that as long as that image was preserved among them, they should never be conquered ; so long as God's presence is with a people, so long they are safe ; every true child of God fears lest God should

go, and the glory depart. Try by this, whether we have a filial disposition ; do we love God, and doth this love cause fear and jealousy ? are we afraid lest we should lose God's presence, lest the sun of righteousness remove out of our horizon ? Many are afraid lest they should lose some of their worldly profits, but not lest they lose the presence of God ; if they may have peace and trading, they care not what become of the ark of God. A true child of God fears nothing so much as the loss of his father's presence, *Hof. ix. 12. Wo to them when I depart from them.* 2. Love to our heavenly Father is seen by loving his day, *Isa. lviii. 13. If thou call the sabbath a delight.* The ancients called this *regina dierum*, the queen of days. If we love our Father in heaven, we spend this day in devotion, in reading, hearing, meditating : on this day manna falls double. God sanctified the sabbath ; he made all the other days in the week, but he hath sanctified this day ; this day he hath crowned with a blessing. 3. Love to our heavenly Father is seen by loving his children, *1 John v. 1. Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* If we love God, the more we see of God in any, the more we love them ; we love them, though they are poor : a child loves to see his father's picture, though hung in a mean frame ; we love the children of our Father, tho' they are persecuted, *2 Tim. i. 16. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of my chain.* *Constantine* did kiss the hole of *Paphnusus's* eye, because he suffered the loss of his eye for Christ : it appears they have no love to God, who have no love to his children ; they care not for their company ; they have a secret disgust and antipathy against them : hypocrites pretend great reverence to the saints departed, they canonize dead saints, but persecute living : I may say of these, as the apostle, *Heb. xii. 8. They are bastards, not sons.* 4th, Effect of love, if we love our heavenly Father, then we will be advocates for him, and stand up in the defence of his truth : he who loves his father will plead for him when he is traduced and wronged : he hath no child-like heart, no love to God, who can hear God's name dishonoured, and be silent. Doth Christ appear for us in heaven, and are we afraid to appear for him on earth ? Such as dare not own God and religion in times of danger, God will be ashamed to be called their God ; it would be a reproach to him to have such children as will not own him. 2dly. A child-like



love to God is known, as by the effects, so by the degree; it is a superior love. We love our Father in heaven above all other things; above estate or relations, as oil runs above the water, *Pf. lxxiii. 25.* A child of God seeing a supereminency of goodness, and a constellation of all beauties in God, he is carried out in love to him in the highest measure: as God gives his children such a love as they bestow upon the wicked, electing love; so God's children give such a love as they bestow upon none else, adoring love; they give him the flower and spirits of their love; they love him with a love joyned with worship, this spiced wine they keep only for their Father to drink of, *Cant. viii. 2.* (4.) A child-like disposition is seen in honouring our heavenly Father, *Mal. i. 6. A son honoureth his father.*

*Qu. How do we show our honour to our Father in heaven?*

*Ans. 1.* By having a reverential awe of God upon us, *Lev. xxv. 17. Thou shalt fear thy God.* This reverential fear of God, is, when we dare do nothing that he hath forbidden in his word, *Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* It is the part of the honour a son gives to his father, he fears to displease him. (2.) We show our honour to our heavenly Father, by doing all we can to exalt God, and make his excellencies shine forth; though we cannot lift up God higher in heaven, yet we may lift him higher in our hearts, and in the esteem of others. When we speak well of God, set forth his renown, display the trophies of his goodness; when we ascribe the glory of all we do to God, when we are the trumpeters of God's praise; this is an honouring our Father in heaven, and a certain sign of a child-like heart, *Pf. l. 23. Who so offereth praise, glorifieth me.*

2. We may know God is our Father, by resembling of him: the child is his father's picture, *Judg. viii. 18. Each one resembled the children of a king: every child of God resembles the king of heaven.* Herein God's adopting children and man's differ: a man adopts one for his son and heir, that doth not at all resemble him; but whosoever God adopts for his child, is like him; he not only bears his heavenly Father's name, but image, *Col. iii. 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him.* He who hath God for his Father, resembles God in holiness: holiness is the glory of the

Godhead, *Exod. xv. 11.* The holiness of God is the intrinsic purity of his essence. He who hath God for his Father, partakes of the divine nature; though not of the divine essence, yet of the divine likeness: as the seal sets its print and likeness upon the wax, so he who hath God for his Father, hath the print and effigies of his holiness stamped upon him, *Pf. cvi. 16. Aaron the saint of the Lord.* Wicked men desire to be like God hereafter in glory, but do not affect to be like him here in grace; they give it out to the world that God is their Father, yet have nothing of God to be seen in them, they are unclean: they not only want his image, but hate it.

3. We may know God is our Father, by having his Spirit in us: 1. By having the intercession of the Spirit; 'tis a spirit of prayer, *Gal. iv. 6. Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Prayer is the soul's breathing itself into the bosom of its heavenly Father: none of God's children are born dumb; *Implet Spiritus sanctus organum suum, & tanquam pila chordarum tangit Spiritus Dei corda sanctorum,* Prosper. *Acts ix. 11. Behold, he prayeth:* but it is not every prayer evidenceth God's Spirit in us. Such as have no grace may excel in gifts, and affect the hearts of others in prayer, when their own hearts are not affected; as the lute makes a sweet sound in the ears of others, but itself is not sensible: how therefore shall we know our prayers are indited by God's Spirit, and so he is our Father?

*Ans. 1.* When they are not only vocal, but mental; when there are not only gifts, but groans, *Rom. viii. 26.* The best music is in concert; the best prayer is when the heart and tongue joyn together in concert.

2. When they are zealous and fervent, *Jam. v. 16. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* The eyes melt in prayer, the heart burns. Fervency is to prayer, as fire to the incense; it makes it ascend to heaven as a sweet perfume.

3. When prayer hath faith sprinkled in it: prayer is the key of heaven, and faith is the hand that turns it, *Rom. viii. 15. We cry, Abba, Father. We cry, there is fervency in prayer: Abba, Father, there is faith.* Those prayers suffer shipwreck, which dash upon the rock of unbelief. Thus we may know God is our Father, by having his Spirit praying in us; as Christ interceeds above, so the Spirit interceeds within.

within. 2. By having the renewing of the spirit, which is nothing else but regeneration, which is called a being born of the spirit, *John* iii. 5. This regenerating work of the spirit is a transformation, or change of nature, *Rom.* xii. 2. *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* He who is born of God, hath a new heart: new, not for substance but for qualities. The strings of a viol may be the same, but the tune is alter'd. Before this regeneration, there are spiritual pangs, much heart-breaking for sin. Regeneration is called a circumcision of the heart, *Col.* ii. 11. In circumcising there was a pain in the flesh; so in this spiritual circumcision there is a pain in the heart, there is much sorrow arising from the sense of guilt and wrath. The jaylor's trembling, *Acts* xvi. 30. was a pang in the new birth. God's spirit is a spirit of bondage, before it be a spirit of adoption. This blessed work of regeneration spreads over the whole soul; it irradiates the mind, it consecrates the heart, and reforms the life: tho' regeneration be but in part, yet it is in every part, *1 Thess.* v. 23. regeneration is the signature and engraving of the holy Ghost upon the soul; the new born christian is bespangled with the jewels of the graces, which are the angels glory. Regeneration is the spring of all true joy: at our first birth we come weeping into the world, but at our new birth there is cause of rejoicing: for now, God is our Father, and we are begotten to a lively hope of glory, *1 Pet.* i. 3. We may try by this our relation to God. Hath a regenerating work of God's Spirit passed upon our souls? are we made of another spirit, humble and heavenly? this is a good sign of sonship, and we may say, *Our Father which art in heaven.* 3. By having the conduct of the Spirit; we are led by the Spirit, *Rom.* viii. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* God's Spirit doth not only quicken us in our regeneration, but leads us on till we come to the end of our faith, salvation. It is not enough the child have life, but he must be led every step by the nurse, *Hos.* xi. 3. *I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms.* Their arms, as the *Israelites* had the cloud and pillar of fire to go before them, and be a guide to them; so God's Spirit is a guide to go before us, and lead us into all truth, and counsel us in all our doubts, and influence us in all our actions, *Psa.* lxxiii. 24. *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsels.* None can call God Father, but

such as have the conduct of his Spirit. Try then what spirit you are led by: such as are led by a spirit of envy, lust, avarice, these are not led by the Spirit of God; it were blasphemy for them to call God Father: these are led by the spirit of Satan, and may say, *Our Father which art in hell.* 4. By having the witness of the Spirit, *Rom.* viii. 16. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* This witness of the Spirit, suggesting that God is our Father, is not a vocal witness, or voice from heaven: *the Spirit in the word witnesseth*: the Spirit in the word faith, he who is so qualified who is a hater of sin, and a lover of holiness, is a child of God, and God is his Father: if I can find such qualifications wrought, here is the Spirit witnessing with my spirit, that I am a child of God. Besides, we may carry it higher; the Spirit of God witnesseth to our spirit, by making more than ordinary impressions upon our hearts, and giving some secret hints and whispers, that God hath purposes of love to us: here is a concurrent witness of the Spirit with conscience, that we are heirs of heaven, and God is our Father; this witness is better felt than expressed: this witness scatters doubts and fears, silenceth temptations. But what shall one do that hath not this witness of the Spirit? if we want the witness of the Spirit, let us labour to find the work of the Spirit: if we have not the Spirit testifying, labour to have it sanctifying, and that will be a support to us.

4. If God be our Father, we are of peaceable spirits, *Matth.* v. 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers, they shall be called the children of God.* Grace insuleth a sweet, amicable disposition; it files off the ruggedness of mens spirits; it turns the lion-like fierceness into a lamb-like gentleness, *Isa.* ix. 7. They who have God to be their Father, follow peace as well as holiness. God the Father is called the *God of peace*, *Heb.* xiii. 20. God the Son, the *prince of peace*, *Isa.* ix. 6. God the Holy Ghost is a *Spirit of peace*; it is called *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, *Eph.* iv. 3. The more peaceable, the more like God. It is a bad sign God is not their Father, 1st, Who are fierce and cruel, as if, with *Romulus*, they had sucked the milk of an wolf, *Rom.* iii. 17. *The way of peace have they not known*, they sport in mischief; these are they who are of a persecuting spirit, as *Maximus*, *Dioclesian*, *Antichus*, who (as *Eusebius*) took more tedious journeys, and run more hazards



zards in vexing and persecuting the Jews, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. These suries cannot call God Father; if they do, they will have as little comfort in saying Father, as *Dives* had in hell, *Father Abraham*, Luke xvi. 24. 2ly, Who are makers of division, *Rom. xvi. 17. Mark them which cause divisions, and avoid them.* Such as are born of God, are makers of peace: what shall we think of such as are makers of divisions? will God father these? The devil made the first division in heaven; they may call the devil father; they may give the cloven foot in their coat of arms; their sweetest music is in discord; they unite to divide. *Sampson's* fox-tails were tied together, only to set the *Philistines* corn on fire, *Judges xv. 4.* Papists unite, only to set the church's peace on fire. Satan's kingdom grows up by divisions. *St. Chrysostom* observes of the church of *Corinth*, when many converts were brought in, Satan knew no better way to damn up the current of religion, than to throw in an apple of strife, and divide them into parties; one was for *Paul*, and another for *Apollos*, but few for Christ. Would not Christ have his coat rent, and can he endure to have his body rent? Sure God will never father them who are not sons of peace: of all them whom God hates, he is named for one, *who is a sower of discord among brethren*, *Prov. vi. 19.*

5. If God be our Father; then we love to be near God, and have converse with him. An ingenuous child delights to approach near to his father, and go into his presence. *David* envied the birds that they built their nests so near God's altars, when he was debarred his Father's house, *Pf. lxxxiv. 3.* True saints love to get as near to God as they can: in the word they draw near to his holy oracle, in the sacrament they draw near to his table; a child of God delights to be in his Father's presence; he cannot stay away long from God: he sees a sabbath-day approaching, and rejoiceth: his heart hath been often melted and quickned in an ordinance; he hath tasted the Lord is good, therefore he loves to be in his Father's presence; he cannot keep away long from God. Such as care not for ordinances cannot say, *Our Father which art in heaven.* Is God their Father, who cannot endure to be in his presence?

Use I. Of instruction. See the amazing goodness of God, that is pleased to enter into this sweet relation of a Father. God needed not to

adopt us, he did not want a Son, but we did a Father. God showed power in being our Maker, but mercy in being our Father: when we were enemies, and our hearts stood out as gar-risons against God, that he should conquer our stubbornness, and of enemies make us children, and write his name, and put his image upon us, and bestow a kingdom of glory; what a miracle of mercy is this! Every adopted child may say, *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*, *Matth. xi. 26.*

2d. Branch, or Inference. If God be a Father, then hence I infer, Whatever he doth to his children, is love.

(1.) If he smiles upon them in prosperity, it is love: they have the world not only with God's leave, but with his love. God saith to every child of his, as *Naaman* to *Gebazi*, 2 Kings v: 23. *Be content, take two talents.* So saith God to his child, *I am thy Father, take two talents.* Take health, and take my love with it: take an estate, and take my love with it: *take two talents*: God's love is a sweetning ingredient into every mercy.

Qu. How doth it appear that a child of God hath worldly things in love?

Ans. 1. Because he hath a good title to them. God is his Father, therefore he hath a good title. A wicked man hath a civil title to the creature, but no more; he hath it not from the hand of a father: he is like one that takes up cloth at the draper's, and it is not paid for: but a believer hath a good title to every foot of land he hath; his Father hath settled it upon him.

2. A child of God hath worldly things in love, because they are sanctified to him, (1.) They make him better, and are loadstones to draw him nearer to God. (2.) He hath his Father's blessing with them. A little blest is sweet, *Exod. xxiii. 25. He shall bless thy bread and thy water.* *Esau* had the venison, but *Jacob* got the blessing. While the wicked have their meat sawced with God's wrath, *Pf. lxxviii. 30,* 31. believers have their comforts seasoned with a blessing. It was a secret blessing from God made *Daniel's* pulse nourish him more, and make him look fairer than they that ate of the king's meat, *Dan. i. 15.*

3. A child of God hath worldly things in love, because whatever he hath is an earnest of more: every bit of bread is a pledge and earnest of glory.

(2.) God being a Father, if he frown, if he dips

dips his pen in gall, write bitter things; if he corrects, 'tis in love: a father loves his child as well when he doth chastise and discipline him, as when he settles his land on him, *Rev. ii. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke.* Afflictions are sharp arrows (saith *Gregory Nazianzen*) but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father. *Correctio est virtutis gymnasium*; God afflicts with the same love he gives Christ; he doth it to humble and purifie: gentle correction is as necessary as daily bread; nay, as needful as ordinances, as word and sacraments. There is love in all, God smites, that he may save.

(3.) God being a Father, if he desert and hide his face from his child, it is in love. Desertion is sad in itself, a short hell, *Job vi. 9.* When the light is withdrawn, dew falls. Yet we may see a rainbow in the cloud, the love of a Father in all this. 1<sup>st</sup>. God hereby quickens grace. Perhaps grace lay dormant, *Cant. v. 2.* It was as fire in the embers; and God withdraws comfort, to invigorate and exercise grace: faith is a star sometimes shines brightest in the dark night of desertion, *Jonah ii. 4.* 2<sup>dly</sup>. When God hides his face from his child, yet still he is a Father, and his heart is towards his child: as *Joseph*, when he spake roughly to his brethren, and made them believe he would take them for spies; still his heart was full of love, and he was fain to go aside and weep: so God's bowels yern to his children, when he seems to look strange, *Isa. liv. 8.* *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.* Though God may have the look of an enemy, yet still he hath the heart of a father.

3<sup>d</sup>. Branch or Inference. Learn hence the sad case of the wicked: they cannot say, *Our Father in heaven*; they may say, *Our Judge*, but not, *Our Father*; they fetch their pedigree from hell, *John viii. 44.* *Ye are of your father the devil.* Such as are unclean and profane, are the spurious brood of the old serpent, and it were blasphemy for them to call God Father. The case of the wicked is deplorable; if they are in misery, they have none to make their moan to; God is not their Father, he disclaims all kindred with them, *Mat. vii. 23.* *I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity:* the wicked, dying in their sins, can expect no mercy from God as a Father: many say, He that made them will save them; but, *Isa. xxvii. 11.* *It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on*

*them.* Tho' God was their Father by creation, yet because they were not his children by adoption, *therefore he that made them would not save them.*

Use II. Of exhortation. To persuade all who are yet strangers to God, to labour to come into this heavenly kindred: never leave till you can say, *Our Father which art in heaven.*

Qu. But will God be a Father to me, who have profaned his name, and been a great sinner?

Ans. If thou wilt now at last seek to God by prayer, and break off thy sins, God hath the bowels of a Father for thee, and will in no ways cast thee out. When the prodigal did arise and go to his Father, *his father had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him,* *Luke xv. 20.* Tho' thou hast been a prodigal, and almost spent all upon thy lusts, yet, if thou wilt give a bill of divorce to thy sins, and flee to God by repentance, know that he hath the bowels of a father: he will embrace thee in the arms of his mercy, and seal thy pardon with a kiss. What tho' thy sins have been heinous? the wound is not so broad as the plaister of Christ's blood. The sea covers great rocks; the sea of God's compassion can drown thy great sins; therefore be not discouraged, go to God, resolve to cast thyself upon his fatherly bowels; God may be entreated of thee, as he was of *Manasseh*, 2 *Chron. xxxiii. 13.* *He prayed unto the Lord, and he was entreated of him.* *Manasseh* made the streets run with blood; yet when his eyes ran with tears, God's fatherly bowels began to melt, and he was entreated of him.

Use III. Of comfort. To such as can upon good grounds call God Father. There's more sweetness in this word Father, than if we had ten thousand worlds. *David* thought it a great matter to be son-in-law to a king, 1 *Sam. xviii. 18.* *What is my father's family, that I should be son-in-law to the king?* But what is it to be born of God, and have God for our Father?

Qu. Wherein lies the happiness of having God for our Father?

Ans. 1. If God be our Father, then he will teach us. What father will refuse to counsel his son? doth God command parents to instruct their children, *Deut. iv. 10.* and will not he instruct his? *Isa. xlviii. 17.* *I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.* *Ps. lxxi.*



17. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth. If God be our Father, he will give us the teachings of his Spirit; *The natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man may have excellent notions in divinity, but God must teach us to know the mysteries of the gospel after a spiritual manner. A man may see the figures upon a dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the sun shine: we may read many truths in the Bible, but we cannot know them savingly, till God, by his Spirit, shine upon our soul. God teacheth not only our ear, but our heart: he not only informs our mind, but inclines our will: we never learn till God teach us. If God be our Father, he will teach us how to order our affairs with discretion, *Pf. cxii. 5. How to carry ourselves wisely*, 1 Sam. xviii. 5. *David behaved himself wisely*. He will teach us what to answer when we are brought before governors; he will put words into our mouths, *Matth. x. 18, 19, 20. Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake: but take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you*.

2. If God be our Father, then he hath bowels of affection towards us. If it be so unnatural for a father not to love his child, can we think God can be defective in his love? All the affections of parents come from God, yet are but a spark from his flame. He is the Father of mercies, 2 Cor. i. 3. He begets all the mercies and bowels in the creature: his love to his children, is a *love which passeth knowledge*, Eph. iii. 19. It exceeds all dimensions; it is higher than heaven, it is broader than the sea. That you may see God's fatherly love to his children; 1. Consider God makes a precious valuation of them, *Isa. xliii. 4. Since thou wast precious in my sight*. A father prizeth his child above his jewels; their names are precious, for they have God's own name written upon them, *Rev. iii. 12. I will write upon him the name of my God*. Their prayers are a precious perfume; their tears God bottles, *Pf. lvi. 8. God esteems his children as a crown of glory in his hand*, *Isa. lxxv. 3. (2.) God loves the places they were born in the better for their sakes*, *Pf. lxxxvii. 6. Of Zion it shall be said, This man was born there*; this and that believer was born there: God loves the ground his children tread upon; hence Judea, the seat of God's children and chosen, God calls a de-

lightsome land, *Mal. iii. 12*. It was not only pleasant for situation and fruitfulness, but because God's children, who were his *Hephshab*, or delight, lived there. (3.) He chargeth the great ones of the world not to prejudice his children; their persons are sacred, *Pf. cv. 14. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed*. By *anointed*, is meant the children of the high God, who have the unction of the Spirit, and are set apart for God. (4.) God delights in their company, he loves to see their countenance, and hear their voice, *Cant. ii. 14. He cannot refrain long from their company: let but two or three of his children meet and pray together, he will be sure to be among them*, *Matth. xviii. 20. Where two or three are met together in my name, I am in the midst of them*. (5.) God bears his children in his bosom, as a nursing-father doth the sucking-child, *Numb. xi. 12. Isa. xli. 4. To be carried in God's bosom, shows how near his children ly to his heart*. (6.) God is full of solicitous care for them, 1 Pet. v. 7. *He careth for you*. His eye is still upon them, they are never out of his thoughts. A Father cannot always take care for his child, he sometimes is asleep; but God is a Father that never sleeps, *Pf. cxxi. 4. He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*. (7.) He thinks nothing too good to part with to his children: he gives them the kidneys of the wheat, and honey out of the rock, and *Wine on the lees well refined*, *Isa. xxv. 6. He gives them three jewels more worth than heaven, the blood of his Son, the grace of his Spirit, the light of his countenance*. Never was there such an indulgent, affectionate Father. (8.) If God hath one love better than other, he bestows it upon them; they have the cream and quintessence of his love; *He will rejoyce over thee, he will rest in his love*, *Zeph. iii. 17. God loves his children with such a love as he loves Christ*, *John xvii. 26. It is the same love, for the unchangeableness of it: God will no more cease to love his adopted sons, than he will to love his natural Son*.

3. If God be our Father, he will be full of sympathy, *Pf. ciii. 13. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*. *Jer. xxxi. 20. Is Ephraim my dear son? my bowels are troubled for him*. God pities his children in two cases; (1.) In case of infirmities. (2.) Injuries.

(1.) In case of infirmities. If the child be deformed or hath any bodily distemper, the father pities it: if God be our father, he pities our weaknesses; and he so pities them as to heal them, *Isa. lvii. 18. I have seen his ways, and will heal him.* As God hath bowels to pity, so he hath balsam to heal.

(2.) In case of injuries. Every blow of the child goes to the father's heart: when the saints suffer, God doth sympathize, *Isa. lxiii. 9. In all their afflictions he was afflicted.* He did, as it were, bleed in their wounds. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* When the foot was trod on, the head cried out, *Judges x. 16. God's soul was grieved for the children of Israel.* As when one string in a lute is touched, all the rest of the strings sound: when God's children are stricken, his bowels sound, *Zech. ii. 8. He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye.*

4. If God be our father, he will take notice of the least good he sees in us: if there be but a sigh for sin, God hears it, *Pf. xxxviii. 9. My groaning is not hid from thee.* If there be but a penitential tear comes out of our eye, God sees it, *Isa. xxxviii. 5. I have seen thy tears.* If there be but a good intention, God takes notice, *1 Kings viii. 18. Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house to my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.* God punisheth intentional wickedness, and crowns intentional goodness, *Thou didst well that it was in thine heart.* God takes notice of the least scintilla, the least spark of grace in his children, *1 Pet. iii. 6. Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord:* the Holy Ghost doth not mention Sarah's unbelief, or laughing at the promise; he puts a finger upon the scar, winks at her failing, and only takes notice of the good that was in her, her obedience to her husband; *she obeyed Abraham calling him lord.* Nay, that good which saints scarce take notice of in themselves, God in a special manner observes, *Mat. xxv. 35. I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink.* Then shall the righteous say, *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?* They did as it were overlook and disclaim their own works of charity, yet Christ doth take notice, *I was an hungred and ye fed me.* What comfort is this! God spies the least good in his children: he can see a grain of corn hid under chaff, grace hid under corruption.

5. If God be our father, he will take all we do in good part. Those duties we ourselves,

censure, God will crown. When a child of God looks over his best duties, he sees so much sin cleaving to him, that he is even confounded: Lord, saith he, there is more sulphur than incense in my prayers. But, for your comfort, if God be your father, he will crown those duties which you yourselves censure: God sees there is sincerity in the hearts of his children, and this gold, (though light) shall have grains of allowance; though there may be defects in the services of God's children, yet God will not cast away their offering, *2 Chron. xxx. 20. The Lord healed the people.* The tribes of Israel being straitened in time, wanted some legal purifications; yet, because their hearts were right, God healed them; he pardoned them. God accepts of the good will, *2 Cor. viii. 12. A father takes a letter from his son kindly,* though there are blots or bad English in it. What blotings are there in our holy things? Yet our father in heaven accepts; saith God, it is my child, and he will do better; I will look upon him, through Christ, with a merciful eye.

6. If God be our father, then he will correct us in measure, *Jer. xxx. 11. I will correct thee in measure;* and that two ways; 1<sup>st</sup>. It shall be in measure, for the kind; God will not lay upon us more than we are able to bear, *1 Cor. x. 13. He knows our frame, Pf. ciii. 14. He knows we are not steel or marble,* therefore will deal gently, he will not over-afflict: as the physician that knows the temper of the body, will not give physic too strong for the body; nor will he give one dram or scruple too much. God hath not only the title of a father, but the bowels of a father; he will not lay too heavy burdens on his children, lest their spirits fail before him. 2<sup>dly</sup>, He will correct in measure, for the duration; he will not let the affliction ly on too long, *Pf. cxv. 3. The rod of the wicked, shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.* It may be there, and not rest, *Isa. lvii. 16. I will not contend for ever.* Our heavenly father will love for ever, but he will not contend for ever. The torments of the damned are for ever, *Rev. xiv. 11. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.* The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but God's children only taste of the cup of affliction, and their heavenly father will say, *transeat calix, let this cup pass away from them, Isa. xxxv. 10. A sing a wing.*

7. If God be our father, he will intermix mercy with all our afflictions: if he gives us wormwood



wormwood to drink, he will mix it with honey. In the ark, the rod was laid up, and manna; with our father's rod there is always some manna. *Asher's shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipt in oil*, Gen. xxxiii. 24. Affliction is the shoe of brass that pincheth; but there is mercy in the affliction, there is the foot dipt in oil. When God afflicts the body, he gives peace of conscience; there is mercy in the affliction. An affliction comes to prevent falling into sin; there is mercy in the affliction. *Jacob had his thigh hurt in wrestling*; there was the affliction: but then he saw God's face, and received a blessing from the angel, Gen. xxxii. 30. There was mercy in the affliction. In every cloud a child of God may see a rainbow of mercy shining. As the limner mixeth dark shadows and bright colours together; so our heavenly father mingles the dark and bright together, crosses and blessings; and is not this a great happiness, for God thus to chequer his providences, and mingle goodness with severity?

8. If God be our father, the evil one shall not prevail against us. Satan is called *the evil one*, emphatically: he is the grand enemy of the saints; and that both in a military sense, as he fights against them with his temptations; and in a forensical or law-sense, as he is an accuser, and pleads against them; yet neither way shall he prevail against God's children. As for his shooting his fiery darts, God will bruise Satan shortly under the saints feet, Rom. xvi. 20. As for his accusing, Christ is advocate for the saints, and answers all bills of indictment brought in against them. God will make all Satan's temptations promote the good of his children, 1st. As they set them more a-praying, 2 Cor. xii. 8. Temptation is a medicine for security. 2dly, As they are a means to humble them, 2 Cor. xii. 7. *Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh*. The thorn in the flesh was a temptation; this thorn was to prick the bladder of pride. 3dly, As they establish them more in grace: a tree shaken by the wind is more settled and rooted: the blowing of a temptation doth but settle a child of God more in grace. Thus the *evil one*, Satan, shall not prevail against the children of God.

9. If God be our father, no real evil shall befall us, Ps. xci. 10. *There shall no evil befall thee*. It is not said, no trouble; but, no evil: God's children are privileged persons; they are privileged persons; they are privileged from the hurt of every thing, Luke x. 19. No-

thing shall by any means hurt you. The hurt and malignity of the affliction is taken away: affliction to a wicked man hath evil in it; it makes him worse, Rev. xvi. 9. *Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God*. But no evil befalls a child of God; he is bettered by affliction, Heb. xii. 10. *That ye may be made partakers of his holiness*. What hurt doth the furnace to the gold? It only makes it purer: What hurt doth affliction to grace? Only refine and purify it. What a great privilege is this, to be freed, though not from the stroke of affliction, yet the sting! No evil shall touch a saint: when the dragon hath poisoned the water, they say, the unicorn, with his horn, doth draw out the poison: Christ hath drawn out the poison of every affliction, that it cannot prejudice a child of God. Again, no evil befalls a child of God, because no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. *No condemnation to them in Christ Jesus*. God doth not condemn them, nor conscience doth not condemn them. Both jury and judge acquit them; then no evil befalls them, for nothing is really an evil but that which damns.

10. If God be our father, this may make us go with cheerfulness to the throne of grace: were a man to petition his enemy, there were little hope: but when a child petitions his father, he may come with confidence to speed. The word *father* works upon God, it toucheth his very bowels. What can a father deny his child? *If a Son ask bread, will he give him a stone?* Matth. vii. 9. This may embolden us to go to God for pardon of sin, and further degrees of sanctity. We pray to a father of mercy, sitting upon a throne of grace, Luke xi. 13. *If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give his spirit to them that ask him?* This did quicken the church, and add wings to prayer, Isa. lxiii. 15. *Look down from heaven*. Ver. 16. *Doubtless thou art our father*. Who doth God keep his mercies for, but his children? Three things may cause boldness in prayer: we have a father to pray to, and the spirit to help us to pray, and an advocate to present our prayers. God's children should in all their troubles run to their heavenly father, as that sick child, 2 Kings iv. 19. *He said unto his father, my head, my head*. So pour out thy complaint to God in prayer, *father, my heart, my heart: my dead heart, quicken it; my hard heart, soften it in Christ's blood*.

blood. *Father, my heart, my heart.* Sure God, that hears the cry of the ravens, will hear the cry of his children.

11. If God be our father, he will stand between us and danger; a father will keep off danger from his child. God calls himself *Scutum*, a shield: a shield defends the head, guards the vitals; God shields off danger from his children, *Acts xviii.* 10. *I am with thee, and none shall set on thee to hurt thee.* God is an hiding-place, *Pf. xxvii.* 5. God preserved *Athanasius* strangely; he put it into his mind, to depart out of the house he was in, the night before the enemies came to search for him. As God hath a breast to feed, so he hath wings to cover his children, *Pf. xci.* 4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.* God appoints his holy angels to be a lifeguard about his children, *Heb. i.* 14. Never was any prince so well guarded as a believer. The angels, *1st.* Are a numerous guard, *2 Kings vi.* 17. *The mountain was full of horses round about Elisha.* The horses and chariots of fire were the angels of God, to defend the prophet *Elisha.* 2dly, A strong guard; one angel, in a night, slew an hundred and fourscore and five thousand, *2 Kings xix.* 32. If one angel slew so many, what would an army of angels have done? 3dly, The angels are a swift guard; they are ready in an instant to help God's children: therefore they are described with wings, to show their swiftness; they fly to our help, *Dan. ix.* 21, 23. *At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to thee?* Here was a swift motion for the angel to come from heaven to earth between the beginning and ending of *Daniel's* prayer. 4thly, The angels are a watchful guard; not like *Saul's* guard, asleep when their lord was in danger, *1 Sam. xxvi.* 12. The angels are a vigilant guard, they watch over God's children to defend them, *Pf. xxxiv.* 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.* There is an invisible guardianship of angels about God's children.

12. If God be our father, we shall not want any thing that he sees it good for us, *Pf. xxxiv.* 10. *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* God is pleased sometimes to keep his children to hard commons, but it is good for them: sheep thrive best on short pasture; God sees too much may not be good: plenty breeds surfeit. *Luxuriant animi rebus secundis.* God sees it good sometimes to diet his children,

and keep them short, that they may run the heavenly race the better: it was good for *Jacob* there was a famine in the land: it was a means to bring him to his son *Joseph*: So it is that God's children see the world's emptiness, that they may acquaint themselves more with Christ's fulness. If God see it be good for them to have more of the world, they shall have it: God will not let them want any good thing.

13. If God be our father, all the promises of the Bible belong to us: God's children are called *heirs of the promise*, *Heb. vi.* 17. A wicked man can lay claim to nothing in the Bible but the curses; he hath no more to do absolutely with the promises, than a plowman hath to do with the city charter: the promises are children's bread; the promises are *milk-trail* *Evangelii*, the breasts of the gospel milking out consolations; and who are to suck of these breasts but God's children? The promise of pardon is for them, *Jer. xxxiii.* 8. *I will pardon all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me.* The promise of healing is for them, *Isa. lvii.* 18. The promise of salvation, *Jer. xxiii.* 6. The promises are supports of faith; they are God's sealed deed; they are a Christian's cordial. O the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the lembic of the promises! Saint *Chrysostom* compares the scripture to a garden, the promises are the fruit-trees that grow in the garden: a child of God may go to any promise in the Bible, and pluck comfort from it: he is an heir of the promise.

14. God makes all his children conquerors: *They are born of God, and are conquerors.* 1. They conquer themselves; *fortior est qui se quam qui fortissima vincit maenia.* The saints conquer their own lusts; they bind these princes in fetters of iron, *Pf. cxlix.* 8. Though the children of God may sometimes be foiled, and lose a single battle, yet not the victory. 2. They conquer the world: the world holds forth her two breasts of profit and pleasure, and many are overcome by it; but the children of God have a world-conquering faith, *1 John v.* 4. *This is the victory over the world, even our faith.* 3. They conquer their enemies: how can that be, when they oft take away their lives? 1. They conquer, by not complying with them: the three children would not fall down to the golden image, *Dan. iii.* 18. They would rather burn than bow; here they were conquerors. He who complies with another's lust, is a captive; he who refuseth to comply, is a conqueror.



(2.) God's children conquer their enemies by heroic patience. A patient Christian, like the anvil, bears all strokes invincibly: thus the martyrs overcame their enemies by patience. Nay, *God's children are more than conquerors*, Rom. viii. 37. *We are more than conquerors*. How are God's children more than conquerors. Because they conquer without loss, and because they are crowned after death, which other conquerors are not.

15. If God be our father, he will now and then send us some tokens of his Love. *God's children live far from home*, and meet sometimes with coarse usage from the unkind world; therefore God, to encourage his children, sends them sometimes tokens and pledges of his love: What are these? He gives them a return of prayer, there is a token of love; he quickens and enlargeth their hearts in duty, there is a token of love; he gives them the first-fruits of his spirit which are love-tokens, Rom. viii. 23. As God gives the wicked the first fruits of hell, horror of conscience and despair: so he gives his children the first-fruits of his spirit, joy and peace which are foretastes of glory: some of God's children having received these tokens of love, from their heavenly father, have been so transported, that they have died for joy, as the glass oft breaks with the strength of the wine put into it.

16. If God be our father, he will indulge and spare us, Mal. iii. 17. *I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him*. God's sparing his children, imports this, his clemency towards them; he doth not punish them as he might, Ps. ciii. 10. *He hath not dealt with us according to our sins*. We oft do that which merits wrath, grieve God's spirit, relapse into sin; God passeth by much, and spares us: God did not spare his natural son, Rom. viii. 32. Yet he will spare his adopted sons; God threatened Ephraim, to make him as the chaff driven with the whirlwind, but he soon repented, Hos. xiii. 4. *Yet I am the Lord thy God, ver. 10. I will be thy king*. Here God spared him, as a father spares his son. *Israel* oft provoked God with their complaints, but God used clemency towards them, he oft answered their murmurings with mercies; here he spared them, as a father spares his son.

17. If God be our father, he will put honour and renown upon us at the last day. 1. He will clear the innocency of his children. God's children in this life are strangely misrepresented to

the world; they are loaded with invectives, they are called factious, seditious: *Elijah*, the troubler of *Israel*; *Luther* was called the trumpet of rebellion; *Athanasius* was accused to the emperor *Constantine*, to be the raiser of tumults; the primitive Christians were accused to be *infanticidii*, *incestus rei*, killers of their children, guilty of incest; as *Tertullian*. St. *Paul* reported to be a pestilent person, Acts xxiv. 5. Famous *Wickliff* called the idol of the hereticks, and that he died drunk. If Satan cannot defile God's children, he will disgrace them; if he cannot strike his fiery darts into their conscience, he will put a dead fly into their name: but God will one day clear his childrens innocency, he will roll away their reproach, as God will make a resurrection of bodies, so of names, Isa. xxv. 8. *The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away*. God will be the saints compurgator, Ps. xxxix. 6. *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light*. The night casts its dark mantle upon the most beautiful flowers; but the light comes in the morning and dispels the darkness, and every flower appears in its orient brightness. So the wicked may, by misreports, darken the honour and repute of the saints; but God will dispel this darkness, and cause their names to shine forth: *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light*. As God did stand up for the honour of *Moses*, when *Aaron* and *Miriam* went about to eclipse his fame, Numb. xii. 8. *Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?* So will God say one day to the wicked, wherefore were not ye afraid to defame and traduce my children? They having my image upon them, how durst ye abuse my picture? At last God's children shall come forth out of all their calumnies, as a *dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold*, Ps. lxxviii. 13. 3. God will make an open and honourable recital of all their good deeds: as the sins of the wicked shall be openly mentioned, to their eternal infamy and confusion; so all the good deeds of the saints shall be openly mentioned; and then shall every man have praise of God, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Every prayer made with melting eyes, every good service, every work of charity, shall be openly declared before men and angels, Mat. xxv. 35. *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me*. Thus God will set a trophy of honour upon all his children at the last day; then

*then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father, Mat. xiii. 43.*

18. If God be our father, he will settle good land of inheritance upon us, *1 Pet. i. 4. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.* A father may be fallen to decay, and have nothing to leave his son but his blessing; but God will settle an inheritance on his children, and an inheritance no less than a kingdom, *Luke xii. 32. It is your Father's good pleasure, to give you a kingdom.* This kingdom is more glorious and magnificent than any earthly kingdom; it is set out by pearls and precious stones, the richest Jewels, *Rev. xii. 19.* What are all the rarities of the world to this kingdom? The coasts of pearl, the islands of spices, the rocks of diamonds? In this heavenly kingdom is that which is satisfying, unparalleled beauty, rivers of pleasure, and this for ever, *Pf. xvi. 11. At thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore.* Heaven's eminency is its permanency; and this kingdom God's children shall enter into immediately after death: there is a sudden transition and passage from death to glory, *2 Cor. v. 9. Absent from the body, present with the Lord.* God's children shall not stay long for their inheritance; it is but winking, and they shall see God. How may this comfort God's children, who perhaps are low in the world? Your father in heaven, will settle a kingdom upon you at death, such a kingdom as eye hath not seen; he will give you a crown not of gold, but glory; he will give you white robes lined with immortality. *It is your Father's good pleasure, to give you a kingdom.*

19. If God be our father, it is comfort, *1.* In case of loss of relations: hast thou lost a father? Yet, if thou art a believer, thou art no orphan, thou hast an heavenly father, a father that never dies, *1 Tim. vi. 16. Who only hath immortality.* *2.* It is comfort, in case of death: God is thy father, and at death thou art going to thy father: well might *Paul* say *death is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 2.* It is your friend, that will carry you home to your father. How glad are children when they are going home? This was Christ's comfort at death, he was going to his Father, *John xvi. 28. I leave the world, and go to the father.* And, *John xx. 17. I ascend to my father.* If God be our father, we may with comfort at the day of death, resign our souls into his hand: so did Christ, *Luke xxiii. 46. Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.*

If a child hath any jewel, he will in time of danger, put it into his father's hands, where he thinks it will be kept most safe: our soul is our richest jewel; we may at death resign our souls into God's hands, where they will be safer than in our own keeping; *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* What a comfort is this, death carries a believer to his father's house, *where are delights unspeakable and full of glory!* How glad was old *Jacob*, when he saw the wagons and chariots to carry him to his son *Joseph*? The text saith, *His spirit revived, Gen. xlv. 27.* Death is a triumphant chariot, to carry every child of God, to his father's mansion-house.

20. If God be our father, he will not disinherit his children; God may for a time desert them, but not disinherit them. The sons of kings have been sometimes disinherited by the cruelty of usurpers; as, *Alexander the Great* his son was put by his just right, by the violence and ambition of his father's captains: but what power on earth, shall hinder the heirs of the promise from their inheritance; men cannot, and will God cut off the entail? The *Arminians* hold falling away from grace, and so a child of God may be defeated of his inheritance: but I shall show that God's children can never be degraded or disinherited, their heavenly father will not cast them off from being children. *1.* It is evident God's children cannot be finally disinherited, by virtue of the eternal decree of heaven. God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints perseverance depends; God's decree ties the knot of adoption so fast, that neither sin, death or hell, can break it asunder, *Rom. viii. 30. Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, &c.* Predestination is nothing else but God's decreeing a certain number to be heirs of glory, on whom he will settle the crown; whom he predestinates, he glorifies. What shall hinder God's electing love, or make his decree null and void? *2.* Besides God's decree, he hath engaged himself by promise, that the heirs of heaven shall never be put by their inheritance. God's promises are not like blanks in a lottery, but as a sealed deed which cannot be reversed: the promises are the saints royal charter; and this is one promise that their heavenly father will not disinherit them, *Jer. xxxii. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* God's fidelity, which is



the richest pearl of his crown, is engaged in this promise for his childrens perseverance; *I will not turn away from them*. A child of God cannot fall away, while he is held fast in these two arms of God, his love, and his faithfulness. 3. Jesus Christ undertakes, that all God's children by adoption shall be preserved, in a state of grace till they inherit glory: as the heathens feigned of *Atlas*, that he did bear up the heavens from falling; Jesus Christ is that blessed *Atlas*, that bears up the saints from falling away.

Qu. 1. *How doth Christ preserve the saints graces, till they come to heaven?*

Ans. 1. *Influxu spiritus*. Christ carries on grace in the soul of the elect, by the influence and co-operation of his spirit: Christ doth, *spiritu*, continually excite and quicken grace in the godly; his spirit doth blow up the sparks of grace into a holy flame; *Spiritus est vicarius Christi*; the spirit is Christ's vicar on earth, his proxy, his executor, to see that all that Christ hath purchased for the saints be made good: Christ hath obtained an inheritance incorruptible for them, 1 *Pet.* i. 4. and the spirit of Christ is his executor, to see that his inheritance be settled upon them. 2. Christ carries on perseveringly in the souls of the elect, *vi orationis*, by the prevalency of this intercession, *Heb.* vii. 25. *He ever lives to make intercession for them*. Christ prays that every saint may hold out in grace till he comes to heaven; can the children of such prayers perish? If the heirs of heaven should be disinherited, and shall fall short of glory, then God's decree must be reversed, his promise broken, Christ's prayer frustrated, which were blasphemy to imagine. 4. That God's children cannot be disinherited or put by their right to the crown of heaven, is evident from their mystical union with Christ. Believers are incorporated into Christ, they are knit to Christ, as the members to the head, by the nerves and ligaments of faith, so that they cannot be broken off, *Eph.* i. 22, 23. *The church which is his body*. What was once said of Christ's natural body, is as true of his mystical, *A bone of it shall not be broken*. As it is impossible to sever the heaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, that they should ever, by the power of death or hell, be separated. Christ and his spiritual members make one Christ: now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ want any part of his body

mystical and be perfect? Every member is an ornament to the body, and adds to the honour of it: how can Christ part with any mystical member, and not part with some of his glory too? So that by all this it is evident, that God's children must needs persevere in grace, and cannot be disinherited. If they could be disinherited, then the scripture could not be fulfilled, which tells us of glorious rewards for the heirs of promise, *Psa.* lvi. 11. *Doubtless there is a reward for the righteous*. Now, if God's adopted children should fall away finally from grace, and miss of heaven, what reward were there for the righteous? and *Moses* did indiscreetly to look for the recompense of reward, and so there would be a door opened to despair.

Obj. *This doctrine of God's children persevering, and having the heavenly inheritance settled on them, may cause carnal security, and make them less circumspect in their walking.*

Ans. Corrupt nature may, as the spider, suck poison from this flower; but a sober Christian, who hath felt the efficacy of grace upon his heart, dares not abuse this doctrine: he knows perseverance is attained in the use of means, therefore he walks holily, that so in the use of means he may arrive at perseverance. St. Paul knew that he should not be disinherited, and that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ: but who more holy and watchful than he? 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. *I keep under my body*; and, *Phil.* iii. 14. *I press towards the mark*. God's children have that holy fear in them, as keeps them from security and wantonness; they believe the promise, therefore they rejoice in hope; they fear their hearts, therefore they watch and pray. Thus you see what strong consolation there is for all the heirs of the promise. Such as have God for their father are the happiest persons on earth; they are in such a condition that nothing can hurt them; they have their father's blessing, all things conspire for their good; they have a kingdom settled on them, and the entail can never be cut off. How may God's children be comforted in all conditions, let the times be what they will? their father is in heaven he rules all: if troubles arise, they shall but carry God's children so much the sooner to their father. The more violently the wind beats against the sails of a ship, the sooner the ship is brought to the haven; and the more fiercely God's children are assaulted, the sooner they come to their father's house, 1 *Thess.* iv. 18.

18. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Use 4. Of exhortation. Let us behave and carry ourselves as the children of such a father, in several particulars.

1. Let us depend upon our heavenly Father in all our straits and exigencies: let us believe that he will provide for us. Children rely upon their parents for the supply of wants: if we trust God for salvation, shall we not trust him for a livelihood? There is a lawful provident care to be used, but beware of a distrustful care, *Luke xii. 24. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, and God feedeth them.* Doth God feed the birds of the air, and will he not feed his children? *V. 27. Consider the lilies how they grow; they spin not: yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* Doth God clothe the lilies, and will he not clothe his lambs? Even the wicked taste of God's bounty, *Pf. lxxiii. 7. Their eyes stand out with fatness.* Doth God feed his slaves, and will not he feed his family? God's children may not have so liberal a share in the things of this life, but little meal in the barrel; they may be drawn low, but not drawn dry; they shall have so much as God sees is good for them, *Pf. xxxiv. 10. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* If God gives them not *ad voluntatem*, he will *ad sanitatem*; if he gives them not always what they crave, he will give them what they need; if he gives them not a feast, he will give them a *viaticum*, a bait by the way: let God's children therefore depend upon God's fatherly providence; give not way to distrustful thoughts, distracting cares, or indirect means; God can provide for you without your sins, *1 Pet. v. 7. Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* An earthly parent may have affection for his child, and would provide for him, but sometimes he is not able; but God can create a supply for his children, yea, he hath promised a supply, *Pf. xxxvii. 3. Verily thou shalt be fed.* Will God give his children heaven, and will he not give them enough to bear their charges thither? will he give them a kingdom, and deny them daily bread? O depend upon your heavenly Father; he hath said, *he will never leave you nor forsake you, Heb. xiii. 5.*

2. If God be our Father, let us imitate him: the child doth not only bear his father's image, but doth imitate him in his speech, gesture, behaviour; if God be our Father, let us imitate

him, *Eph. v. 1. Be ye followers of God as dear children.* 1. Imitate God in forgiving injuries, *Isa. xlv. 22. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions.* As the sun scatters not only thin mists, but thick clouds, so God pardons great offences; imitate God in this, *Eph. iv. 32. Forgiving one another.* Cranmer was a man of a forgiving spirit, he did bury injuries, and requite good for evil: he who hath God for his Father, hath God for his pattern. 2. Imitate God in works of mercy; *He looseth the prisoners, Ps. cxlvi. 7. He opens his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, Ps. cxlv. 16.* He drops his sweet dew as well upon the thistle as the rose: imitate God in works of mercy, relieve the wants of others, be rich in good works, *Luke vi. 36. Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* Be not so hard-hearted, as to shut the poor out of the lines of communication. *Dives* denied *Lazarus* a crumb of bread, and *Dives* was denied a drop of water.

3. If God be our Father, let us submit patiently to his will; if he lay his strokes on us, they are the corrections of a Father, not the punishments of a judge: this made Christ so patient, *John xviii. 11. Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?* He sees we need affliction, *1 Pet. i. 6.* he appoints it as a diet-drink to purge and sanctify us, *Isa. xxvii. 9.* therefore dispute not; but submit, *Heb. xii. 9. We had fathers of the flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence:* they might correct out of an humour, but God doth it for our profit, *Heb. xii. 10.* Therefore say, as *Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* What gets the child by struggling, but more blows? what got *Israel* by their murmuring and rebelling, but a longer and more tedious march, and at last their carcases fell in the wilderness?

4. If God be our Father, let this cause in us a child-like reverence, *Mal. i. 6. If I be a father, where is my honour?* this is a part of the honour we give to God, when we reverence and adore him: if you have not always a child-like confidence, yet always have a child-like reverence. And how ready are we to run into extremes, either to despond or grow wanton? Because God is a Father, therefore do not think you may be secure and take liberty to sin; if you do, God may carry it so as if he were no Father, he may throw hell into your conscience. When *David* presumed upon God's paternal affection, and began to wax wanton under



mercy, God made him pay dear for it, he withdrew the sense of his love; and though he had the heart of a Father, yet he had the look of an enemy. *David prayed, cause me to hear the voice of joy*, Ps. li. 8. He lay several months in desertion, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. Oh keep alive holy fear; with a child-like confidence, preserve an humble reverence: the Lord is a Father, therefore love to serve him; he is the mighty God, therefore fear to offend him.

5. If God be our Father, let us walk obediently, 1 Pet. i. 14. *As obedient children*. When God bids you be humble and self-denying, deny yours, part with your bosom-sin: be sober in your attire, savoury in your speeches, grave in your deportment, obey your Father's voice; open to God, as the flower opens to the sun; as you expect your Father's blessing, obey him in whatever he commands, first and second table duties. A lutanist, that he may make sweet music, toucheth upon every string of the lute; the ten commandments are like a ten-stringed instrument, touch upon every string, obey every commandment, or you cannot make sweet melody in religion. Obey your heavenly Father, though he commands things contrary to flesh and blood. 1. When he commands to mortify sin, that sin which hath been dear to you; pluck out this right eye, that you may see the better to go to heaven. 2. When he commands you to suffer for him, be ready to obey, *Acts* xxi. 13. Every good Christian hath a spirit of martyrdom in him, and is ready rather to suffer for the truth, than the truth should suffer. *Luther* said he had rather be a martyr, than a monarch. *Peter* was crucified with his head downwards, as *Eusebius*. *Ignatius* called his chains his spiritual pearls, and did wear his fetters as a bracelet of diamonds. This is to carry it as God's children, when we obey his voice, and count not our lives dear, so that we may show our love to our heavenly Father, *Rev.* xii. 11. *They loved not their lives to the death*.

6. If God be your Father, show it by your cheerful looks, that you are the children of such a Father. Too much drooping and despondency disparageth the relation you stand in to God. What though you meet with hard usage in the world? You are now in a strange land, far from home; it will be shortly better with you, when you are in your own country, and your Father hath you in his arms. Doth not the heir rejoice in hope? Shall the sons of a

king walk dejected? 2 Sam. xiii. 4. *Why art thou, being the king's son, lean?* is God an unkind Father? are his commands grievous? hath he no land to give to his heirs? why then do God's children walk so sad? Never had children such privileges as they who are of the seed-royal of heaven, and have God for their Father; they should rejoice therefore, who are within a few hours to be crowned with glory.

7. If God be our Father, let us honour him by walking very holily, 1 Pet. i. 16. *Be ye holy, for I am holy*. A young prince asking a philosopher how he should behave himself, the philosopher said, *Memento te filium esse regis, Remember thou art a king's son*: do nothing but what becomes the son of a king: so remember you are the adopted sons and daughters of the high God, do nothing unworthy of such a relation. A debauched child is the disgrace of his father. Is this thy son's coat? said they to *Jacob*, when they brought it home dipped in blood, *Gen.* xxxvii. 32. so when we see a person defiled with malice, passion, drunkenness, we may say, is this the coat of God's adopted son? doth he look as an heir of glory? 'Tis a blaspheming the name of God, to call him Father, yet live in sin. Such as profess God is their Father, yet live unholily, they will slander and defraud; these are as bad to God as heathens, *Amos* ix. 7. *Are ye not as children of the Ethiopian to me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord?* The *Ethiopians* were uncircumcised, a base, ill-bred people; when *Israel* grew wicked, they were no better to God than *Ethiopians*. Loose, scandalous livers under the gospel are no better in God's esteem than *pagans* and *Americans*; nay, they shall have an hotter place in hell. O let all who profess God to be their Father, honour him by their unspotted lives. *Scipio* abhorred the embraces of an harlot, because he was the general of an army; abstain from all sin, because you are born of God, and have God for your Father, 1 *Thess.* v. 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil*. It was a saying of *Augustus*, an emperor should not only be free from crimes, but from the suspicion of them. By an holy life you would bring glory to your heavenly Father, and cause others to become his children: *Est pallas virtutis odor*. *Causinus* in his hieroglyphics, speaks of a dove, whose wings being perfumed with sweet ointments, did draw the other doves after her: the holy lives of God's children is a sweet perfume to draw others to religion, and make them to be of the family

family of God. *Justin Martyr* saith, That which converted him to *christianity*, was the beholding the blameless lives of the *Christians*.

8. If God be our Father, let us love all that are his children, *Pf. cxxxiii. 1. How pleasant is it for brethren to dwell together in unity: 'tis compared to ointment, ver. 2. for the sweet fragrant of it. 1 Pet. ii. 27. Love the brotherhood. Idem est motus animæ in imaginem & rem.* The saints are the walking pictures of God: if God be our Father, we love to see his picture of holiness in believers; we pity them for their infirmities, but love them for their graces; we prize their company above others, *Pf. cxix. 63.* It may justly be suspected that God is not their Father, who love not God's children; though they retain the communion of saints in their creed, yet they banish the communion of saints out of their company.

9. If God be our Father, let us show heavenly-mindedness: they who are born of God, do set their affections on things that are above, *Col. iii. 2.* O ye children of the high God! do not disgrace your high birth by fordid covetousness. What, a son of God, and a slave to the world! what, sprung from heaven, and buried in the earth! For a Christian, who pretends to derive his pedigree from heaven, yet wholly to mind earthly things, is to debase himself; as if a king should leave his throne to follow the plough, *Jer. xlv. 5. Seekest thou great things for thyself?* As if the Lord had said, *What thou Barak; thou who art born of God, a-kin to angels, and by thy office a Levite, dost thou debase thyself, and spot the silver wings of thy grace, by beliming them with earth? Seekest thou great things? Seek them not.* The earth chokes the fire: earthliness chokes the fire of good affections.

10. *ult.* If God be our Father, let us own our heavenly Father in the worst times; stand up in his cause, defend his truths. *Athanasius* owned God, when most of the world turned *Arians*. If sufferings come, do not deny God: he is a bad son, who denies his father. Such as are ashamed of God in times of danger, God will be ashamed to own them for his children, *Mark viii. 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels.* So I have done with the first part of the preface, *Our Father.*

II. The second part of the preface (which I shall but briefly touch on) is, *Which art in heaven.* God is said to be in heaven, not that he is so included there, that he is no where else; for the *heaven of heavens cannot contain him.* 1 Kings viii. 27. But, the meaning is, God is chiefly resident in the empyrean heaven, which the apostle calls the *third heaven*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. there God doth most give forth his glory to his saints and angels.

Qu. *What may we learn from this, that God is in heaven?*

Ans. 1. Hence we learn that we are to raise our minds in prayer above the earth. God is no where to be spoken with but in heaven. God never denied that soul his suit, who went as far as heaven to ask it.

2. We learn, from God's being in heaven, his sovereign power. *Hoc vocabulo intelligitur omnia subesse ejus imperio,* Calvin. *Pf. cxv. 3. Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatever he pleased.* God being in heaven governs the universe, and orders all occurrences here below for the good of his children: when the saints are in straits and dangers, and see no way of relief, he can send from heaven, and help them, *Pf. lvii. 3. He shall send from heaven, and save me.*

3. We learn God's glory and majesty: he is in heaven; therefore he is *covered with light*, *Pf. civ. 6. Clothed with honour*, *Pf. civ. 1.* and is as far above all worldly princes, as heaven is above earth.

4. We learn, from God's being in heaven, his omniscency; *All things are naked, and unmasked to his eye*, *Heb. iv. 13.* Men plot and contrive against the church; but God is in heaven, and they do nothing but what our Father sees. If a man were on the top of an high tower or theatre, he might thence see all the people below: God is in heaven, as in an high tower or theatre, and he sees all the transactions of men. The wicked make wounds in the backs of the righteous, and then pour in vinegar; God writes down their cruelty, *Exod. iii. 7. I have seen the afflictions of my people.* God is in heaven, and he can thunder out of heaven upon his enemies, *Pf. xviii. 13. The Lord thundered in the heavens; yea, he sent out arrows, and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*

5. We learn, from God's being in heaven, comfort for the children of God; when they pray to their Father, the way to heaven cannot



be blocked up. One may have a father living in foreign parts, but the way, both by sea and by land, may be so blocked up, that there is no coming to him : but thou, saint of God, when thou prayest to thy Father, he is in heaven ; and though thou art never so confined, thou mayest have access to him. A prison cannot keep thee from thy God : the way to heaven can never be blocked up.

So I have done with the word *Father* : I shall next speak of the pronoun *Our, Father*. Christ, by this word (*Our*), would teach us thus much ; *That in all our prayers to God, we should act faith. Our Father ; Father*, denotes reverence ; *Our Father*, denotes faith. In all our prayers to God we should exercise faith, *Our Father*. Faith is that which baptizeth prayer, and gives it a name ; it is called the *prayer of faith*, James v. 15. Without faith it is speaking, not praying. Faith is the breath of prayer ; prayer is dead, unless faith breathe in it. Faith is a necessary requisite in prayer. The oil of the sanctuary was made up of sweet spices, *pure myrrh, cassia, cinnamon*, Exod. xxx. 23. Faith is the chief spice, or ingredient into prayer, which makes it go up to the Lord, as sweet incense, *Jam. i. 6. Let him ask in faith*. Mat. xxi. 22. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Invoco te, Domine, quanquam languida & imbecilla fide, tamen fide ; Lord, (said Cruciger) I pray, though with a weak faith, yet with faith*. Prayer is the gun we shoot with, fervency is the fire that dischargeth it, and faith is the bullet which pierceth the throne of grace : prayer is the key of heaven, faith is the hand that turns it ; *pray in faith, Our Father*. Faith must take prayer by the hand, or there is no coming nigh to God ; prayer without faith is unsuccessful. If a poor handy-craftsman, that lives by his labour, hath spoiled his tools, that he cannot work, how shall he subsist ? Prayer is the tool we work with, which procures all good for us : but unbelief spoils and blunts our prayers, and then we can get no blessing from God : a prayer that is faithless is fruitless. As *Joseph said, You shall not see my face, unless you bring your brother Benjamin with you*, Gen. xliii. 3. So prayer cannot see God's face, unless it bring its brother faith with it. What is said of *Israel, They could not enter in because of unbelief*, Heb. iii. 19. is as true of prayer, it cannot enter into heaven, because of unbelief. This makes prayer often suffer shipwreck, because it dasheth upon the

rock of unbelief. O sprinkle faith in prayer. We must say, *Our Father*.

Qu. 1. *What doth praying in faith imply ?*

Ans. Praying in faith implies the having of faith ; the act implies the habit. To walk implies a principle of life ; so to pray in faith implies an habit of grace. None can pray in faith but believers.

Qu. 2. *What is it to pray in faith ?*

Ans. 1. To pray in faith, is to pray for that which God hath promised ; where there is no promise, we cannot pray in faith.

2. To pray in faith, is to pray in Christ's meritorious name, *John xiv. 13. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do*. To pray in Christ's name, is, to pray in the hope and confidence of Christ's merit. When we present Christ to God in prayer ; when we carry the Lamb slain in our arms ; when we say, *Lord, we are sinners, but here is our surety ; for Christ's sake be propitious* : this is coming to God in Christ's name ; and this is to pray in faith.

3. To pray in faith, is, in prayer, to fix our faith on God's faithfulness, believing that he doth hear, and will help ; this is a taking hold of God, *Isa. lxiv. 7*. By prayer we draw nigh to God, by faith we take hold of him, *2 Chron. xiii. 14. The children of Judah cried unto the Lord ; and this was the crying of faith, v. 12. They prevailed, because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers*. Making supplication to God, and staying the soul on God, is praying in faith. To pray, and not rely on God for the granting our petitions, *irrisio Dei est*, faith *Pelican* ; it is to abuse and put a scorn on God. By praying we seem to honour God, by not believing we affront him. In prayer we say, Almighty, merciful Father ; by not believing, we blot out all his titles again.

Qu. 3. *How may we know that we do truly pray in faith ? We may say, Our Father, and think we pray in faith, when it is in presumption ; how therefore may we know that we do indeed pray in faith ?*

Ans. 1. When our faith in prayer is humble : a presumptuous person hopes to be heard in prayer, for some inherent worthiness in himself ; he is so qualified, and hath done God good service, therefore he is confident God will hear his prayer : see an instance, *Luke xviii. 11, 12. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust : I fast twice in the week ;*

*week; I give tithes of all that I possess.* This was a presumptuous prayer; but a sincere heart doth as well act humility in prayer as faith, *Luke xviii. 13. The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* God be merciful, there was faith; to me a sinner, there was humility, and a sense of unworthiness.

2. We may know we pray in faith, when, though we have not the present thing we pray for, yet we believe God will grant, therefore we will stay his leisure. A Christian having a command to pray, and in a promise, he is resolved to follow God with prayer, and not give over: as *Peter*, he knocked, yet the door was not opened; but he continued knocking, and at last it was opened, *Acts xii. 16.* So a Christian prays and prays, but hath no answer; but he will continue knocking at heaven's door, knowing an answer will come, *Pf. lxxxvi. 7. Thou wilt answer me.* Here is one that prays in faith. Christ saith, *Pray and faint not,* *Luke xviii. 1.* A believer, at Christ's word, lets down the net of prayer, and though he catch nothing, he will cast the net of prayer again, believing that mercy will come. Patience in prayer is nothing but faith spun out.

*Use I.* It reproves them that pray in formality, not in faith: they question whether God hears or will grant, *Jam. iv. 3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.* He doth not say, ye ask that which is unlawful; but, ye ask amiss: When men pray, and believe not, they ask amiss, and therefore they receive not. Unbelief clips the wings of prayer, that it will not flee to the throne of grace; the rubbish of unbelief stops the current of prayer.

*Use II. Of exhortation.* Let us set faith a work in prayer, [*Our father.*] The husbandman sows in hope: prayer is the seed we sow; when the hand of faith scatters this seed, it brings forth a fruitful crop of blessing, prayer is the ship we send out to heaven; when faith makes an adventure in this ship, it brings home large returns of mercy. O pray in faith, say, *Our father.* And that we may act faith in prayer, consider.

(1.) God's readiness to hear prayer. *Deus paratus ad vota exaudienda,* Calvin. Did God forbid all addresses to him, it would put a damp upon the trade of prayer; but God's ear is open to prayer. It is one of the names by which God is known, *Pf. lxxv. 2. O thou that hearest prayer.* The *Aediles* among the Romans had their doors al-

ways standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them. God is both ready to hear, and grant prayer: this may encourage faith in prayer. And, whereas some may say, they have prayed, but have had no answer. 1. God may hear prayer, though he do not presently answer: we write a letter to a friend, he may have received it, though we have yet had no answer of it. Perhaps thou prayest for the light of God's face; God may lend thee an ear, though he doth not show thee his face; 2. God may give an answer to prayer, when we do not perceive it. His giving an heart to pray, and inflaming the affections in prayer, is an answer of prayer, *Pfal. cxxxviii. 3. In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me and strengthenedst with strength in my soul.* David's inward strength was an answer of prayer, therefore let God's readiness to hear prayer encourage faith in prayer.

2. That we may act faith in prayer, consider, we do not pray alone; Christ prays over our prayers again: Christ's prayer is the ground why our prayer is heard. Christ takes the dross out of our prayer, and presents nothing to his father but pure gold. Christ mingles his sweet odours with the prayers of the saints, *Rev. v. 8.* Think of the dignity of his person, he is God; and the sweetness of his relation, he is a son. O what encouragement is here, to pray in faith! Our prayers are put into the hand of a mediator. Christ's prayer is mighty and powerful.

3. We pray to God for nothing, but what is pleasing to him, and he hath a mind to grant: if a son ask nothing but what his father is willing to bestow, this may make him go to him with confidence. When we pray to God for holy hearts, there's nothing more pleasing to him, 1 *Theff. iv. 3. This is the will of God, even your sanctification.* We pray that God would give us an heart to love him, and there is nothing he more desires than our love. How may this make us pray in faith, when we pray for nothing but what is acceptable to God, and which he delights to bestow?

4. To encourage faith in prayer, consider the many sweet promises that God hath made to prayer. The cork keeps the net from sinking; the promises are the cork to keep faith from sinking in prayer. God hath bound himself to us by his promises: the Bible is bespangled with promises made to prayer, *Isa. xxx. 19. He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry. The Lord is rich unto all that call upon him,*



*him*, Rom. x. 12. Jer. xxix. 13. *Then shall ye find me when ye search for me with all your heart*, Pl. cxlv. 19. *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him*. The Tyrians tied their god *Hercules* with a golden chain that he should not remove: God hath tied himself fast by his promises? How should these animate and spirit faith in prayer? Faith gets strength in prayer, by sucking from the breast of a promise.

5. That we may act faith in prayer, consider, Jesus Christ hath purchased that which we pray for; we may think the things we ask for us in prayer too great for us to obtain, but they are not too great for Christ to purchase; we pray for pardon, Christ hath purchased it in his blood; we pray for the spirit to animate and inspire us, the sending down the Holy Ghost into our hearts is the fruit of Christ's death, *John* xvi. This may put life into our prayers, and make us pray in faith; because the things we ask in prayer, though they are more than we deserve, yet not more than Christ hath purchased for us.

6. To make us pray in faith, consider there is such a bountifulness in God, that he often excels the prayers of his people; he gives them more than they ask! as *Hannah* asked a son, and God gave her not only a son, but a prophet. *Solomon* asked wisdom, and God gave him not only wisdom, but riches and honour besides; *Jacob* prayed that God would but give him food and raiment, and the Lord increased his pilgrim's staff into two bands, *Gen.* xxxii. 10. God is oft better to us than our prayers, as when *Gehazi* asked but one talent, *Naaman* would needs force two upon him, *2 Kings* v. 23. We ask one talent of mercy, and God gives two talents. The woman of *Canaan* asked but a crumb, namely, to have the life of her child; and Christ gave her more, he sent her home with the life of her soul.

7. The great success the prayer of faith hath found; like *Jonathan's* bow, it hath not returned empty. *Vocula pater dicta in corde*, faith *Luther*. This little word *father*, pronounced in faith, hath overcome God, *Gen.* xxxii. 11. *Deliver me, I pray thee*. And this was mixed with faith in the promise, *v.* 12. *Thou saidst I will surely do thee good*: and this prayer had power with God, and prevailed, *Hos.* xii. 4. The prayer of faith hath opened prison-doors, stopp'd the chariot of the sun, locked, and unlocked heaven, *James* v. 17. The

prayer of faith hath strangled the plots of enemies in the birth, it hath routed their forces; *Moses's* prayer against *Amalek* did more than *Joshua's* sword; and may not this hearten and corroborate faith in prayer?

8. If all this will not prevail, consider how heartless and comfortless it is to pray, and not in faith: the heart misgives secretly, God doth not hear, nor will he grant. Faithless praying must needs be comfortless; for there is no promise made to unbelieving prayer. It is sad sailing where there is no anchoring, and sad praying where there is no promise to anchor upon, *James* i. 7. The disciples toiled all night and caught nothing: the unbeliever toils in prayer and catcheth nothing; he receives not any spiritual blessings, pardon of sin, or grace: as for the temporal mercies the unbeliever hath, he cannot look upon them as the fruit of prayer, but as the overflowings and spillings of God's bounty, oh therefore labour to exert and put forth faith in prayer.

Obj. *But there is so much sin cleaves to my prayer, that I fear it is not the prayer of faith, and God will not hear it.*

Ans. If thou mournest for this, it hinders not but that thy prayer may be in faith, and God may hear it: weakness in prayer shall not make void the saints prayers, *Pf.* xxxi. 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off*. There was much unbelief in this prayer: *I said in my haste*; in the Hebrew, *in my trembling*. *David's* Faith did tremble and faint, yet God heard his prayer. The saints passions do not hinder the saints prayers, *James* v. 17. Therefore be not discouraged; though sin will cleave to thy holy offering, yea these two things may comfort, thou mayst pray with faith, though with weakness; and God sees the sincerity, and will pass by the infirmity.

Qu. *How shall we do to pray in faith?*

Ans. Implore the spirit of God: we cannot say, *our father*; but by the Holy Ghost. God's spirit helps us, not only to pray with sighs and groans, but with faith. The spirit carries us to God, not only as to a creator, but a father, *Gal.* iv. 6. *He hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, abba, father*. Crying, there the spirit causeth us to pray with fervency, *abba father*. There the spirit helps us to pray with faith. Prayer is the key of heaven, the spirit helps faith to turn this key, and then it unlocks heaven.

## OF THE FIRST PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 9. *Hallowed be thy Name.*

HAVING spoken of the introduction to the Lord's prayer, *after this manner pray ye*; and the preface, *Our father which art in heaven*: I come now, thirdly, to the prayer itself, which consists of seven petitions: a short body of divinity is contained in them. I begin with the first petition.

I. *Hallowed be thy name.* In the Latin, it is, *sanctificetur nomen tuum*, sanctified be thy name. In this petition, *hallowed be thy name*, we pray, that God's name may shine forth gloriously, and that it may be honoured and sanctified by us, in the whole course and tenor of our lives. It was the angels song, *glory be to God in the highest*; that is, let his name be glorified and hallowed. This petition, *hallowed be thy name*, is set in the forefront to show, that the hallowing of God's name is to be preferred before all other things; 1. It is to be preferred before life; we pray, *Hallowed be thy name*, before we pray, *Give us this day our daily bread*. It is to be preferred before salvation, *Rom. ix. 1*. God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all mens souls. As Christ said of love, *Mat. xxii. 37. This is the first and great commandment*; so I may say of this petition, *Hallowed be thy name*, it is the first and great petition; it contains the most weighty thing in religion, God's glory. When some of the other petitions shall be useless and out of date, we shall not need pray in heaven, *Give us our daily bread*, because there shall be no hunger; nor, *Forgive us our trespasses*, because there shall be no sin; nor, *Lead us not into temptation*, because the old serpent is not there to tempt: yet the hallowing of God's name shall be of great use, and request in heaven; we shall be ever singing hallelujahs, which is nothing else but the hallowing of God's name. Every person in the blessed trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must have this honour; to be hallowed; their glory being equal, and their majesty co-eternal. *Hallowed be thy name.* To admire God's name is not enough; we may admire a conqueror: but when we say, *Hallowed be thy name*, we set

God's name above every name, and not only admire him, but adore him; and this is proper only to the Deity. For the further explication, I shall propound three questions:

1. *What is meant by God's name?*
2. *What is meant by hallowing God's name?*
3. *When may we be said to hallow or sanctify God's name?*

Qu. 1. *What is meant by God's name?*

Ans. 1. By God's name is meant his essence, *Pf. xx. 1. The name of the God of Jacob defend thee*; that is, the God of Jacob defend thee.

2. By God's name is meant any thing by which God may be known; as a man is known by his name, God's name is his attributes; wisdom, power, holiness, goodness; by these God is known by his name.

Qu. 2. *What is meant by hallowing of God's name?*

Ans. To hallow, is a *communi-separare*, to set apart a thing from the common use, to some sacred end. As the vessels of the sanctuary were said to be hallowed; so to hallow God's name, is to set it apart from all abuses, and to use it holily and reverently: in particular, hallowing of God's name is to give him high honour and veneration, and render his name sacred. We can add nothing to God's essential glory; but we are said to honour and sanctify his name, when we lift up in the world and make him appear greater in the eyes of others. When a prince is crowned, there is something added really to his honour; but when we go to crown God with our triumphs and hallelujahs, there is nothing added to his essential glory: God cannot be greater than he is, only we may make him appear greater in the eyes of others.

Qu. 3. *When may we be said to hallow and sanctify God's name?*

Ans. 1. When we profess his name. Our meeting in his holy assembly is an honour done to God's name; this is good, but it is not enough. All that wear God's livery by profession, are not true servants; there are some professors, Christ will at the last day profess against, *Mat.*



vii. 23. *I will profess I never knew you.* Therefore, to go a little further.

2. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we have an high appreciation and esteem of God; we set him highest in our thoughts; The *Hebrew* word to honour, signifies to esteem precious: we conceive of God in our minds as the most superexcellent and infinite good; we apprehend in God, a constellation of all beauties and delights; we adore God in his glorious attributes, which are the several beams by which, his divine nature shines forth; we adore God in his works, which are bound up in three great volumes, creation, redemption, providence: We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we list him highest in our souls; we esteem him a supereminent and incomprehensible God.

3. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we trust in his name, *Pf. xxxiii. 21. We have trusted in his holy name:* no way can we bring more reverence of honour to God, or make his crown shine brighter, than by confiding in him, *Rom. iv. 20. Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God:* there was an hallowing of God's name: as unbelief stains God's honour, and eclipseth his name, *1 John v. 10. He that believeth not, makes God a liar:* so faith doth glorify and hallow God's name: The believer trusts his best jewels in God's hands, *Pf. iii. 5. Into thy hands I commit my spirit:* faith in a mediator doth more honour and sanctify God's name, than martyrdom, or the most sublime acts of obedience.

4. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we never make mention of his name, but with the highest reverence; God's name is sacred, and it must not be spoken of, but with veneration: the scripture, when it speaks of God, gives him his titles of honour, *Gen. xiv. 20. Blessed be the most high God:* *Neh. ix. 5. Blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all praise:* to speak vainly or slightly of God, is a profaning his name, and is a taking his name in vain: let his name be hallowed; by giving God his venerable titles, we do as it were hang his jewels on his crown.

5. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we love his name, *Pf. v. 11. Let them that love thy name be joyful:* and that love which is honouring God's name, must be a special discriminating love, the cream and flower of our love; such a love as we give to none besides; as the wife honours her husband, by

giving him such a love as she gives to none else, a conjugal love; so we hallow God's name, by giving him such love as we give to none else, a love joined with worship, *Pf. xlv. 11. He is thy God, and worship thou him.*

6. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we give him an holy and spiritual worship: 1. We give him the same kind of worship that he hath appointed: *Lev. x. 3. I will be sanctified of all them that come nigh to me;* that is, I will be sanctified with that very worship I have appointed: it is the purity of worship God loves better than the pomp: it is a dishonouring of God's name, to bring any thing into his worship which he hath not instituted: as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served, men will go to prescribe him, and super-add their inventions: this God looks upon as offering strange fire, and it is an high provocation. 2. We give God the same heart-devotion in worship as he hath appointed, *Rom. xii. 11. Ferment in spirit, serving the Lord:* The word for *ferment*, is a metaphor that alludes to water, that seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in holy duties: to give God outside worship, and not the devotion of the heart, is, instead of hallowing and sanctifying him in an ordinance, to abuse him; as if one call for wine, and you give him an empty glass: it is to deal with God, as *Prometheus* did with *Jupiter*, who did eat the flesh and present *Jupiter* with nothing but bones covered over with skin. Then we hallow God's name, and sanctify him in an ordinance, when we give him the vitals of religion, an heart flaming with zeal.

7. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we hallow his day, *Jer. xvii. 22. Hallow ye the sabbath-day.* Our Christian sabbath, which comes in the room of the *Jews* sabbath, is called the *Lord's day*, *Rev. i. 10.* This was anciently called *dies lucis*, a day of light; wherein Christ the son of righteousness shines in an extraordinary manner. It is an honour done to God, to hallow his sabbath. 1. We must rest on this day from all secular works, *Jer. xvii. 21. Bear no burden on the sabbath-day.* As *Joseph*, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the *Egyptians*: so, when we would have converse with God on this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments: it is observable, *Mary Magdalene* refused to anoint Christ's dead body on the sabbath-

sabbath-day, *Luke xxiii. 56.* She had before prepared her ointment and spices, but came not to the sepulchre till the sabbath was past; she rested on that day from civil work, though it were a commendable and glorious work, the anointing of Christ's dead body. 2. We must in a solemn manner devote our selves to God on this day; we must spend this whole day with God. Some will hear the word, but leave all their religion at church; they do nothing at home, they do not pray or repeat the word in their houses, and so they rob God of a part of his day: it is to be bewailed to see how God's day is prophaned. Let no man think God's name is hallowed while his sabbath is broken.

8. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we ascribe the honour of all we do to him, *Pf. xcvi. 8. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* Herod, instead of hallowing God's name, stained the honour of his name, in assuming that praise to himself which was due to God, *Acts xii. 23.* We ought to take the honour from ourselves and give it to God, *1 Cor. xv. 10. I laboured more than they all: one would think this had favoured of pride, but the apostle pulls the crown from his own head, and sets it upon the head of free grace? Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, or victory over temptation, he rears up a pillar, and writes upon it, *Hucusque adjuvavit Deus*,---Hitherto the Lord hath helped me. *John Baptist* transferred all the honour from himself to Christ; he was content to be eclipsed, that Christ might shine the more, *John i. 15. He that cometh after me is preferred before me.* I am but the herald, the voice of one crying; he is the prince; I am but a lesser star, he is the sun: I baptize only with water, he with the holy Ghost. This is an hallowing God's name, when we translate all the honour from ourselves to God. *Pf. cxv. 1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.* The king of Sweden wrote that motto on the battle at *Lyppswick, Ista a Domino facta sunt*, The Lord hath wrought this victory for us.

9. We hallow and sanctify God's name, by obeying him: how doth a son more honour his father, than by obedience? *Pf. xl. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God.* The wise men showed honour to Christ, not only by bowing the knee to him, but by presenting him with gold and myrrhe, *Mat. ii. 11.* We hallow God's name, not only by lifting up our eyes

and hands to heaven, and bowing the knee in prayer, but by presenting God with golden obedience. As the factor trades for the merchant, so we trade for God, and lay out our strength in his service. It was a saying of reverend doctor *Jewel, I have spent and exhausted myself in the labours of my holy calling. To obey is better than sacrifice.* The cherubims representing the angels, are set forth with wings displayed, to show how ready they are to do service to God. To obey is angelical; to pretend honour to God's name, yet not to obey, is but a devout compliment. *Abraham* honoured God by obedience; he was ready to sacrifice his son, though the son of his old age, and a son of the promise, *Gen. xxii. 16. By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son: that in blessing, I will bless thee.*

10. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we lift up God's name in our praises. God is said to sanctify, and man is said to sanctify: God sanctifies us, by giving us grace; and we sanctify him, by giving him praise. What were our tongues given us for, but to be organs of God's praise? *Pf. lxxi. 8. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day. Rev. v. 13. Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.* Thus God's name is hallowed and sanctified in heaven: the angels and glorified saints are singing *hallelujahs*; let us begin the work of heaven here. *David* did sing forth God's praises and doxologies in a most melodious manner, therefore was called the sweet finger of *Israel, 1 Sam. xxiii. 1.* praising God, is an hallowing of God's name; it spreads his renown, it displays the trophies of his excellency, it exalts him in the eyes of others, *Pf. l. 23. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.* This is one of the highest, and purest acts of religion; in prayer we act like men, in praise we act like angels: this is the music of heaven, this is a work fit for a saint, *Pf. cxxix. 5, 6. Let the saints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouths.* None but saints can in a right manner thus hallow God's name by praising him. As every one hath not skill to play on the viol and organ, so every one cannot rightly sound forth God's harmonious praises; only the saints can do it; they only can make their tongue and heart join in consort, *Pf. cxi. 1. I will bless thee, O Lord, with my whole heart,*  
and



and, *Pf. lxxvi. 17. He was extolled with my tongue.* There was heart and tongue joyning in concert. This hallowing God's name by praise is very becoming a Christian: it is unbecoming to murmur, this is a dishonouring God's name; but it becomes the saints to be spiritual choiristers in singing forth the honour of God's name. It is called the *garment of God's praise*, *Isa. lxi. 3.* How comely and handsome is this garment of praise for a saint to wear? *Pf. xxxiii. 1. Praise is comely for the righteous.* Especially, it is an high degree of hallowing God's name, when we can speak well of God, and bless him in an afflicted state, *Job i. 21. The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Many will bless God when he gives; but to bless him when he takes away, is in an high degree to honour God, and hallow his name. Let us thus magnify God's name. Hath not God given us abundant matter of praising him? he hath given us the nether and upper springs; he hath given us grace, a mercy spun and woven out of his bowels; and he intends to crown grace with glory: this should make us hallow God's name; by being trumpets of his praise.

11. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we sympathize with him; we grieve when his name suffers, 1. We lay to heart his dishonour. How was *Moses* affected with God's dishonour? he breaks the tables, *Exod. xxxii. 19.* We grieve to see God's sabbaths prophaned, his worship adulterated, the wine of truth mingled with error, 2. We grieve when God's church is brought low, because now God's name suffers. *Nehemiah* lays to heart the miseries of *Zion*; his complexion begins to alter, and he looks sad, *Neh. ii. 3. Why is thy countenance sad?* what! sad, when the king's cup-bearer, and wine so near! O, but it fared ill with the church of God, and religion seemed to lose ground, and God's name suffered; therefore *Nehemiah* grows weary of the court, he leaves his wine, and mingles his drink with weeping: this holy sympathy, and grieving, when God's name suffers, God esteems an honouring and sanctifying his name. *Hezekiah* grieved when the king of *Affryria* reproached the living God, *Isa. xxxvii. 17. He went into his chamber, and spread the letter of blasphemy before the Lord,* 2 *Kings xix. 14.* And no doubt watered the letter with his tears: he seemed not to be so much troubled at the fear of losing his own life and kingdom, as that God should lose his glory.

12. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we give the same honour to God the Son, as we give to God the Father, *John v. 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* The *Socinians* deny Christ's divinity, saying, that he is a mere man: this is to make him below the angels, *Pf. viii. 5.* for the human nature, considered in itself, is below the angelical: this is to reflect dishonour upon the Lord of glory. We must give equal honour to the Son as to the Father; we must believe Christ's Deity, he is the picture of his Father's glory, *Heb. i. 3.* If the Godhead be in Christ, he must needs be God; but the Godhead shines in him, *Col. ii. 9. In whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily;* therefore, he is God. How could these divine titles be given to Christ? Omnipotency, *Heb. i. 3.* Ubiquity, *Matth. xxviii. 20.* A power of sealing pardons, *Matth. ix. 6.* Co-equal with God the Father, both in power and dignity, *John v. 21. 23.* How, I say, could these titles of honour be ascribed to Christ, if he were not crowned with the Deity? When we believe Christ's Godhead, and build our hope of salvation on the corner-stone of his merit; when we see neither the righteousness of the law, nor of angels can justify, but we flee to Christ's blood as to the altar of refuge; this is an honouring and sanctifying God's name. God never thinks his name to be hallowed, unless his Son be honoured.

13. We hallow God's name, by standing up for his truths. Much of God's glory lies in his truths; God's truths are his oracles: God intrusts us with his truths as a treasure; we have not a richer jewel to intrust God with than our souls, nor God hath not a greater jewel to intrust us with than his truths. God's truths set forth his glory; now, when we are zealous advocates for God's truth, this is an honour done to God's name. *Athanasius* was called *the bulwark of truth*; he stood up in the defence of God's truths against the *Arians*, and so was a pillar in the temple of God: better have truth without peace, than peace without truth. It concerns the sons of *Zion* to stand up for the great doctrines of the gospel; the doctrine of the Trinity, the Hypostatical union, justification by faith, the saints perseverance: we are bid to contend earnestly, *Jude 3.* to strive as in an agony for the faith, that is, the doctrine of faith: this contending for the truth, brings great revenues into heaven's exchequer; this is an hallowing of God's name. Contend for the truth: some

some can contend for ceremonies, but not for the truth. We should count him unwise, that should contend more for a box of counters than for his box of evidences.

14. We hallow and sanctifie God's name, by making as many profelytes as we can to him, by all holy expedients, counsel, prayer, example, we endeavour the salvation of others. How did *Monica*, *St. Austin's* mother, labour for his conversion? She had forer pangs in travail for his new birth, than for his natural birth. 'Tis an hallowing of God's name, when we diffuse the sweet favour of godliness, and propagate religion to others; when not only we ourselves honour God, but are instruments to make others honour him: certainly, when the heart is seasoned with grace, there will be an endeavour to season others. God's glory is as dear to a saint as his own salvation; and that his glory may be promoted, he endeavours the conversion of souls: every convert is a member added to Christ. Let us thus hallow God's name, by labouring to advance piety in others; especially, let us endeavour that those who are nearly related to us, or are under our roof, should honour God, *Josh. xxiv. 15. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* Let us make our houses *Bethels*, places where God's name is called upon, *Col. iv. 15. Salute Nymphas, and the church that is in his house.* Let the parent endeavour that his children may honour God, and the master that his servants honour him; read the word, drop holy instruction, perfume your houses with prayer: the *Jews* had sacrifices in their family, as well as in the tabernacle, *Exod. xii. 3.* This is an hallowing God's name, when we make profelytes to him, and endeavour that all under our charge should honour and sanctify his name.

15. We hallow God's name, when we prefer the honour of God's name before the dearest things. 1. We prefer the honour of God's name before our own credit. The saints of old have, for the honour of God, been willing to endure reproach, *Pf. lxxix. 7. For thy sake I have borne reproach.* *David* cared not what reproach he suffered, so God's name might not suffer. The prophet *Elijah* was called in derision, the *hairy prophet*; and the prophet *Isaiah*, the *bearer of burdens*; and the prophet *Zephaniah*, the *bitter prophet*: but they did bind these reproaches as a crown about their head; the honour of God's name was dearer to them than their own honour: *Moses* esteemed the reproaches of Christ

greater riches than the treasures of *Egypt*, *Heb. xi. 26.* The apostles went away rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, *Acts v. 41.* that they were graced so far, as to be disgraced for the name of Christ: this is an hallowing God's name, when we are content to have our name eclipsed, that God's name may shine the more. 2. We prefer the honour of God's name before our worldly profit and interest, *Matth. xix. 27. We have forsaken all and followed thee.* When these two, *God* and estate, come in competition, we will rather let estate go than *God's* love and favour. Thus that noble marquis of *Vico* parted with a fair estate, using these words, *Let their money perish with them, that count all the gold and silver in the world worth one hour's communion with Jesus Christ.* 3. We prefer the honour of God's name before our life, *Rom. viii. 36. For thy sake are we killed all the day long.* The honour done to God's name, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him as we do to kings, but God's honour comes in another way, and that is by the sufferings of his people: when the world sees how intirely God's people love him, that they will die in his service, this exalts and honours God's name: God's crown doth flourish in the ashes of his martyrs. *St. Basil* speaks of a virgin condemned to the fire, who having her life and estate offered her, if she should bow to the idol, answered, *Valeat vita, pereat pecunia*; let life and money go, welcome Christ. When God's glory weighs heaviest in the balance, and we are willing to suffer the loss of all, rather than God's name should suffer, now we do, in an high degree, hallow God's name.

16. ult. We do hallow and sanctify God's name, by an holy conversation, *1 Pet. ii. 9. Ye are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you.* As an unholy life doth dishonour God's name, *Rom. ii. 24. The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you*; so by our holy and Bible-conversation we honour God's name. An holy life speaks louder than all the anthems and praises in the world: tho' the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet when our light so shines, that others behold it, now they glorify God; when our lives shine, now God's name shines. The *Macedonians* used one day in the year to wear the picture of *Alexander* set with pearl and costly jewels; so, when we carry the picture of Christ about us



in our holy example, now we bring honour to God's name.

*Use. I.* See the true note and character of a godly person; he is a sanctifier of God's name, *Hallowed be thy name*. A true saint doth ambitiously endeavour to advance God's name: this is the question he asks himself in every thing he is going about; Will this action tend to the honour of God's name? will this exalt God? This was *St. Paul's* chief design, that *Christ might be magnified*, Phil. i. 20. viz. that the crown upon his head might flourish: a godly man thinks it is scarce worth the while to live, if he may not bring some revenues of honour to God's name.

*Use. II.* I may here take up a sad lamentation, and speak, as the apostle *Paul weeping*, Phil. iii. 18. To consider how God's name, instead of being hallowed and sanctified, is dishonoured. God's name, which is more worth than the salvation of all mens souls, suffers deeply. We are apt to speak of our sufferings; alas! what are all our sufferings? God's name is the dearest thing he hath: how do men stand upon their name and honour? God's name is this day dishonoured, it is like the sun in an eclipse. *Theodosius* took it heinously when they threw dirt upon his statue; but now (which is far worse) disgrace is thrown upon the glorious name of *Jehovah*. God's name, instead of being hallowed, is dishonoured by all sorts. (1.) By Heathens, (2.) Turks, (3.) Jews, (4.) Papists, (5.) Protestants.

1. By heathens: they have a knowledge of a Godhead by the light of nature, *Rom. i. 19, 20.* but they dishonour God, and sin against the light of nature. The *Egyptians* worship an ox; the *Persians* worship the sun; the *Grecians* and *Romans*, *Jupiter*; and the *Parthians* worship the devil.

2. God's name is dishonoured by the *Turks*: they adore *Mahomet* their great prophet, as one divinely inspired: *Mahomet* was of an impure, vicious life; *Mahomet* plucks the crown from *Christ's* head, denying his Deity.

3. God's name is dishonoured by the *Jews*, who give not equal honour and adoration to God the Son, as to God the Father: they expect a Messiah yet to come, *seculum futurum*; they believe not in *Christ*, they blaspheme him, and slight righteousness imputed; they vilify the Christian sabbath.

4. God's name is dishonoured by the papists. Popery is a God-dishonouring religion; they

dishonour God's name, (1.) By their idolatry, which is *spiritual adultery*, *Ezek. xxiii. 37.* Idolatry is to worship a false God, or the true God in a false manner; this they are guilty of. 1. They dishonour God by their idolatry, in making graven images, and giving the same honour to them as is due to God: images are teachers of lies, *Hab. ii. 18.* they represent God in a bodily shape. 2. By their idolatry in the mass; worshipping the host, and offering it up as a sacrifice for sin; the apostle saith, *Heb. x. 14. By one offering Christ hath perfected them that are sanctified*: but, as if *Christ's* offering on the cross were imperfect, they offer him up daily in the mass, which is a dishonour done to *Christ's* priestly office. (2.) The papists, instead of hallowing God's name, dishonour God's name, by locking up the scriptures in an unknown tongue; they, as the *Philistines*, pluck out the peoples eyes, and then make sport with them: the Bible is a shining light, but they draw a curtain over it; they take away the key of knowledge, *Luke xi. 52.* And hinder God's glory, by hindering mens salvation. (3.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by giving men indulgences. They say, the pope, as *Peter's* successor, hath power to grant indulgences, by virtue whereof, men are set free in the sight of God. 1. It is to steal a flower from the crown of heaven. The pope assumes a power to pardon, which is God's prerogative-royal, *Matth. ii. 7. Who can forgive sin but God only?* 2. The pope, by his indulgence, encourageth men to sin. What need the papists care what sins they commit, when they have a licence and patent from the pope to bear them harmless? (4.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour God's name, by their invocation to saints. We are to pray only to God, *Matth. vi. 6. Pray to thy Father*; not, pray to a saint, or the virgin *Mary*, but pray to your Father in heaven: we may pray to none, but whom we may believe in, *Rom. x. 14.* The saints in heaven are ignorant of our grievances, *Isa. lxiii. 16. Abraham is ignorant of us.* (5.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their luxury and uncleanness; they allow of stews. At *Rome*, fornication keeps open shop, and is in some cases preferred before honourable matrimony; *urbs est jam tota lupanar.* (6.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their blasphemies. They give equal, nay, more honour to the virgin *Mary* than to *Christ*; they ascribe

ascribe more to her milk, than his blood ; they call her *Scala Cæli*, the ladder of heaven ; *Janna paradisi*, the gate *Paradise*. In their doxologies they say, *praise be to the Virgin Mary, and also to Christ*. What blasphemy is this, to set creature above the creator ! They say to her, *O felix puerpera, nostra piaris scelera !* O happy mother of a son that purgest away our crimes ! (7.) Instead of hallowing God's name they dishonour it, by their lies : their golden legend is an imposture, and is full of lying wonders : They show *John Baptist's* fore-head for a relique in *Spain*, yet his whole head they affirm to be seen in *St. Sylvester* in *Rome* : they show *St. Peter's* shadow at *Rome* : indeed we read of *St. Peter's* shadow, *Acts* v. 15. But 'tis strange, how the *Papists* could catch his shadow, and keep it by them so long. (8.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by baptizing sin with the name of virtue. Breach of oaths is with the *papists* a virtue. If a man hath bound his soul to God by an oath, yet to violate this oath is virtuous, if it may propagate the catholic cause. Killing those who are of a different religion, is not only venial, but a virtue among catholics. Destroying two hundred thousand of the *Albigenses*, who were protestants, was commended as a glorious action, honoured with a triumph at *Rome*, and crowned with his holiness's blessing. Is not this an high dishonour to God, to gild over the foulest crimes with the name of virtue and piety ? (9.) Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their damnable assertions ; 1. The *papists* affirm, that the pope is above scripture ; that he may dispense with it, and, that his canons bind more than the word of God. 2. They teach merit by good works : but, if a debtor cannot pay his creditor, how can he merit at his hands ? 3. That the scripture is not a perfect rule of faith, and manners ; therefore they eik it out with their traditions, which they hold to be of equal authority. 4. They teach, that an implicit faith is saving ; tho' one may have an implicit faith, yet be ignorant of all the articles of religion. 5. They say, that the inward act of the mind, is not required in God's worship : diversion of the mind in duty, though one prays and never thinks of God, is no sin, saith *Angelus* and *Sylvester*, and other *papists*. 6. The *papists* make habitual love to God unnecessary : it is not needful, saith *Bellarmino*, to perform any acts of religion out of love to God. *Stapleton* and *Cajetan* affirm, that the

precept of loving God with all our heart is not binding ; by which they cut asunder the sinews and soul of all religion. Thus, instead of honouring God's name, the *papists* dishonour it. Let us pray heartily, that this *Romish* religion may never get footing again in this nation : God grant that this poisonous weed of popery may never be watered here ; but that, it being a plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted, it may be rooted up.

5. God's name is dishonoured by carnal protestants. How is God's name this day dishonoured in *England* ? his name is like the sun in an eclipse. Christians, instead of hallowing God's name, reproach and dishonour it. (1.) By their tongues. (2.) By their lives.

1. By their tongues : (1.) They speak irreverently of God's name : God's name is sacred. *Deut.* xxviii. 58. *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God.* The names of kings are not mentioned without giving them their titles of honour, high and mighty ; but men speak irreverently of God, as if he were like one of them, *Pf.* l. 21. This is a taking God's name in vain. (2.) They swear by his name. Many seldom name God's name, but in oaths : how is God dishonoured, when men rend and tear his name by oaths and imprecations ! *Jer.* xxiii. 10. *Because of swearing the land mourns.* If God will reckon with men for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account-book ? O but, saith one, I cannot help it ; it is a custom of swearing I have got, and, I hope, God will forgive me ! *Ans.* Is this a good plea, a custom of swearing ? This is no excuse, but an aggravation of sin : as if one that had been accused for killing a man should plead with the judge to spare him, because it was his custom to murder ; this were an aggravation of the offence : will not the judge say, thou shalt the rather die ? so it is here.

2. As men dishonour God by their tongues, so by their lives. What is it to say, *Hallowed be thy name*, when in their lives they profane his name ? They dishonour God by their atheism, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, perjury, intemperance, injustice, men hang out a flag of defiance against heaven. As the *Thracians*, when it thunders, shot their arrows against heaven ; so men shoot their sins as bearded arrows against heaven. Sinners are hardened in sin, they despise counsel, they laugh at reproof, they have cast off the veil of modesty. Satan hath taken such full possession of them, that



when they sin, they glory in their shame, *Phil. iii. 19.* They brag how many new oaths they have invented, how oft they have been drunk, how many they have defiled; they declare their sin as *Sodom*: such horrid impieties are committed, that a modest heathen would blush at. Men, in this age, sin at that rate, as if either they did not believe there were an hell, or as if they feared hell would be full ere they could get thither. Was God's name ever so openly dishonoured? All our preaching will not make them leave their sins. What a black veil is drawn over the face of religion at this day? *Vivimus in temporum facibus*---Sen. We live in the dregs of time, wherein the common shore of wickedness runs: physicians call it [*Gr. kachexia,*] when there is no part of the body free from distemper. *England* hath a *kachexy*; it is all over disease: *The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint, Isa. i. 6.* As black vapours rising out of the earth, cloud and darken the sun; so the sins of people in our age, like hellish vapours, cast a cloud upon God's glorious name. O that our eyes were like limbecks, dropping the water of holy tears, to consider how God's name, instead of being hallowed, is polluted and prophaned! And, may not we justly fear some heavy judgments? can God put up our affronts any longer? can he endure to have his name reproached? will a king suffer his crown-jewels to be trampled in the dust? do not we see the symptoms of God's anger? do we not see his judgments hovering over us? Sure God is whetting his sword, he hath bent his bow, and is preparing his arrows to shoot. *Qualis per arva leo fulvam minaci fronte concutiens jubam.* Sen. Trag. The body politic is in a paroxysm, or burning fit; and may not the Lord cause a sad phlebotomy? Seeing we will not leave our sins, he may make us lose our blood. May we not fear that the ark should remove, the vision cease, the stars in God's church be removed, and we should follow the gospel to the grave? When God's name, which should be hallowed, is prophaned among a people, it is just with God to write that dismal epitaph upon a nation's tomb, *The glory is departed.* And, that I may speak to the consciences of all, and deal impartially, it were well if only the prophane party were guilty; but, may not many professors be called to the bar, and indicted of this, that they have dishonoured God's name? *2 Chron. xxviii. 10.* *Are there not with you, even with you, sins a-*

*gainst the Lord your God?* Are there not the spots of God's children? *Deut. xxxii. 5.* If you are diamonds, have you no flaws? have not you your vanities? if your discourse be not prophane, is it not vain? have not you your self-seeking, rash censures, indecent dresses? if the wicked of the land swear, do not you sometimes slander? if they are drunk with wine, are not you sometimes drunk with passion? if their sin be blaspheming, is not your sin murmuring? *Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord?* The sins of God's children go nearer to his heart, than the sins of others, *Deut. xxxii. 19.* *When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.* The sins of the wicked anger God, the sins of his own people grieve him; he will be sure to punish them, *Amos iii. 2.* *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* O that our head were waters, that we could make this place a *bochim*, a place of weepers, that God's children might mix blushing with tears, that they have so little hallowed, and so much eclipsed God's name! Truly God's own people have sinned enough to justify God in all his severe actings against them.

*Use III. Of exhortation.* Let us hallow and sanctify God's name: did we but see a glimpse of God's glory, as *Moses* did in the rock, the sight of this would draw adoration and praise from us: could we see *God face to face*, as the angels in heaven do, could we behold him sitting on his throne like a jasper-stone, *Rev. iv. 3.* we should presently, at the sight of this glory, do as the twenty-four elders, *Rev. iv. 10.* *They worship him that liveth for ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power.* That we may be stirred up to this great duty, the hallowing, adoring and sanctifying God's name, consider,

1. It is the very end of our being; why did God give us our life, but that our living may be an hallowing of his name? why did he give us souls but to admire him; and tongues, but to praise him? The excellency of a thing is, when it attains the end for which it was made: the excellency of a star is to give light, of a plant to be fruitful; the excellency of a Christian, is to answer the end of his creation, which is to hallow God's name, and live to that God by whom he lives. He who lives, and God hath no honour by him, buries himself alive, and exposeth himself to a curse. Christ cursed the barren fig-tree.

2. God's

2. God's name is so excellent, that it deserves to be hallowed, *Pf. viii. 9. How excellent is thy name in all the earth! Pf. civ. 1. Thou art clothed with honour and majesty*, as the sun hath its brightness, whether we admire it or no; so God's name is illustrious and glorious, whether we hallow it or no. In God are all shining perfections, holiness, wisdom, mercy; *he is worthy to be praised*, 2 Sam. xxii. 4. God is *dignus honore*, worthy of honour, love, adoration. We oft bestow titles of honour upon them that do not deserve them; but God is worthy to be praised; his name deserves hallowing; he is above all the honour and praise which the angels in heaven give him.

3. We pray, *hallowed be thy name*; that is, let thy name be honoured and magnified by us. Now, if we do not magnify his name, we contradict our own prayers: to say, *hallowed be thy name*, yet not to bring honour to God's name, is to take his name in vain.

4. Such as do hallow God's name, and bring revenues of honour to him, God will get his honour upon them, *Exod. xiv. 17. I'll get me honour upon Pharaoh*. Pharaoh would not hallow God's name; *Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* Well, faith God, if Pharaoh will not honour me, I will get me honour upon him. When God overthrew him and his chariot in the sea, then he got his honour upon him: God's power and justice were glorified in his destruction. There are some whom God hath raised to great power and dignity, and they will not honour God's name, they make use of their power to dishonour God, they cast reproach upon God's name, and revile his servants: well, they who will not honour God, he will get his honour upon them in their final ruin. Herod did not give glory to God, and God did get his glory upon him, *Acts xii. 23. The angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms*.

5. It will be no small comfort to us when we come to die, that we have hallowed and sanctified God's name: it was Christ's honour a little before his death, *John xvii. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth*. Christ's redeeming mankind was an hallowing and glorifying of God's name; never was more honour brought to God's name, than by this great undertaking of Christ: now, here was Christ's comfort before his death, that he had hallowed God's name, and brought glory to him. So, what a cordial will this be to us at last, when our whole life

hath been an hallowing of God's name? We have loved him with our hearts, praised him with our lips, honoured him with our lives; we have been to the *praise of his glory*, Eph. i. 6. At the hour of death, all your earthly comforts will vanish; to think how rich you have been, or what pleasures you have enjoyed upon earth, this will not give one dram of comfort: what is one the better for an estate that is spent? But now, to have conscience witnessing, that you have hallowed God's name, your whole life hath been a glorifying of him, what sweet peace and satisfaction will this give? That servant who hath been all day working in the vineyard, how glad is he when evening comes, that he shall receive his pay! Such as have spent their lives in honouring God, how sweet will death be, when they shall receive the recompence of reward? What comfort was it to Hezekiah, when he was on his sick-bed, and could appeal to God, *Isa. xxviii. 3. Remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight?* I have hallowed thy name, I have brought all the honour I could to thee, *I have done what is good in thy sight*.

6. There is nothing lost by what we do for God; if we bring honour to his name, he will honour us. Honour is as Balak said to Balaam, *Numb. xxii. 37. Am not I able to promote thee to honour?* So, if we hallow and sanctify God's name, is not he able to promote us to honour? 1. He will honour us in our life. (1.) He will put honour upon our persons: he will number us among his jewels, *Mal. iii. 17*. He will make us a royal diadem in his hand, *Isa. lxii. 3*. He will lift us up in the eyes of others, *Zech. ix. 17. They shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up, as an ensign of glory*: he will esteem us as the cream and flower of the creation, *Isa. xliii. iv. Since thou hast been precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable*. (2.) God will put honour upon your names, *Pro. x. 17. The memory of the just is blessed*. How renowned have the saints been in all ages, who have hallowed God's name? How renowned was Abraham for his faith, Moses for his meekness, David for his zeal, Paul for his love to Christ? Their names, as a precious ointment, send forth a sweet perfume in God's church to this day. 2. God will honour us at our death, he will send his angels to carry us up with triumph into heaven, *Luke xvi. 22. The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into*



Abraham's *bosom*. *Amasis* king of Egypt, had his chariot drawn with four kings, which he had conquered in war; but what is this to the glory every believer shall have at his death? He shall be carried by the angels of God. 3. God will put honour upon us after death; (1.) He will put glory upon our bodies: *we shall be as the angels*, not for substance, but quality; our bodies shall be agile and nimble: now our bodies are as a weight, then they shall be as a wing, moving swiftly from place to place; our bodies shall be full of clarity and brightness, like Christ's glorious body, *Phil. iii. 21*. The bodies of the saints shall be as cloth dyed into a scarlet colour, made more illustrious; they shall be so clear and transparent, that the soul shall sparkle through them, as the wine through the glass. (2.) God will put glory upon our souls: if the cabinet of the body shall be so illustrious, of what orient brightness shall the jewel be? Then will be the great coronation day, when the saints shall wear the robe of immortality, and the crown of righteousness which fades not away. O how glorious will that garland be which is made of the flower of paradise! who then would not hallow and glorify God's name, and spread his renown in the world, who will put such immortal honour upon his people, *as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive?*

7. ult. Such as do not hallow God's name, but prophane and dishonour it, God will pour contempt upon them; though they be never so great, and though clothed in purple and scarlet, yet they are abhorred of God, and their name shall rot. Though the name of *Judas* be in the bible, and the name of *Pontius Pilate*

be in the creed, yet their names stand there for infamy, as being traitors to the crown of heaven, *Nahum i. 14*. *I will make thy grave, for thou art vile*. It is spoken of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, he was a king, and his name signifies *illustrious*, yet God esteemed him a vile person: to show how base the wicked are in God's esteem. He compares them to things most vile; to *chaff*, *Pf. i. 4*. To *drofs*, *Pf. cxix. 118*. And the *filth that comes out of the sea*, *Isa. lvii. 20*. And as God doth thus vilely esteem of such as do not hallow his name, so he sends them to a vile place at last. Vagrants are sent to the house of correction: hell is the house of correction, which the wicked are sent to when they die. Let all this prevail with us to hallow and sanctifie God's name.

Qu. *What may we do to honour and sanctify God's name?*

Ans. Let us get, (1.) a sound knowledge of God. (2.) A sincere love to God:

1. A sound knowledge of God: take a view of his superlative excellencies; his holiness, his incomprehensible goodness. The angels know God better than we, therefore they sanctify his name, and sing hallelujahs to him. And let us labour to know him to be our God, *Pf. xlviii. 14*. *This God is our God*: we may dread God as a judge, but we cannot honour him as a father, till we know he is our God.

2. Get a sincere love to God: A love of appreciation, and a love of complacency to delight in him, *John xxi. 15*. *Lord, thou knowest I love thee*. He can never honour his master who doth not love him. The reason God's name is no more hallowed, is, because his name is no more loved. So much for the first petition.

## OF THE SECOND PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. VI. 10. *Thy Kingdom come.*

A Soul truly devoted to God, joins heartily in this petition, *adveniat regnum tuum, thy kingdom come*: In which words this great truth is implied, that God is a king, *Pf. xlvii. 7*. *God is king of all the earth*. And he is a king upon his throne, *Pf. xlvii. 8*. *God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness*. (1.) He hath a regal title, high and mighty, *Isa. lvii. 15*. Thus

saith the high and lofty one. (2.) He hath the ensigns of royalty: his sword, *Deut. xxxii. 41*. *If I whet my glittering sword*. He hath his sceptre, *Heb. i. 8*. *A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom*. (3.) He hath his crown royal, *Rev. xix. 12*. *On his head were many crowns*. He hath his *jura regalia*, his kingly prerogatives; he hath power to make laws,

laws, to seal pardons, which are the flowers and jewels belonging to his crown. Thus the Lord is king.

And, 2ly, He is a great king, *Pf. xciv. 3. A great King above all gods.* He is great in and of himself; and not like other kings, who are made great by their subjects. That he is so great a king, appears, (1.) By the immenseness of his being, *Jer. xxiii. 24. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.* His centre is every where; he is no where included, yet no where excluded; he is so immensely great, that *the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, 1 Kings viii. 27.* (2.) His greatness appears by the effects of his power, *He made heaven and earth, Pf. cxxiv. 8.* and can unmake it. God can with a breath crumble us to dust: with a word he can unpin the world, and break the axle-tree of it in pieces; *he pours contempt upon the mighty, Job xii. 21. He cuts off the spirit of princes, Pf. lxxxvi. 12.* He is Lord Paramount, *who doth whatever he will, Pf. cxv. 12. He weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, Isa. xl. 12.*

3ly, God is a glorious king, *Pf. xxiv. 10. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.* He hath internal glory, *Pf. xciii. 1. The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty.* Other kings have royal and sumptuous apparel to make them appear glorious to the beholders, but all their glory and magnificence is borrowed; but God is clothed with majesty, his own glorious essence is instead of glorious robes, and *he hath girded himself with strength.* Kings have their guard about them to defend their persons, because they are not able to defend themselves; but God needs no guard or assistance from others: *he hath girded himself with strength.* His own power is his lifeguard, *Pf. lxxxix. 6. Who in the heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* God hath a pre-eminence above all other kings for majesty, *Rev. xix. 16. He hath on his vesture a name written, REX REGVM, KING OF KINGS.* He hath the highest throne, the richest crown, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, *Pf. xxix. 10. The Lord sitteth King for ever.* Though God hath many heirs, yet no successors. He sets up his throne where no other king doth; he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience: angels serve him; all the kings of the earth hold their crowns and diadems by immediate tenure from this great King, *Prov.*

viii. 15. *By me kings reign:* and to this Lord Jehovah all kings must give account, and from God's tribunal there is no appeal.

Use 1. *Branch 1.* If God be so great a king, and sits king for ever, then it is no disparagement for us to serve him; *Deo servire est regnare;* it is an honour to serve a king. If the angels fly swiftly upon the King of heaven's message, *Dan. ix. 21.* then well may we look upon it as a favour to be taken into his royal service. *Theodosius* thought it a greater honour to be God's servant, than to be an emperor. 'Tis more honour to serve God, than to have kings serve us. Every subject of this king is crowned with regal honour, *Rev. i. 6. Who hath made us kings.* Therefore as the queen of *Sheba*, having seen the glory of *Solomon's* kingdom, said, *Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, 1 Kings x. 7.* So, happy are those saints who stand before the king of heaven, and wait on his throne.

*Branch 2.* If God be such a glorious king, crowned with wisdom, armed with power, bespangled with riches, then it shows us what prudence it is to have this king to be ours: to say, as *Pf. v. 2. My king, and my God.* 'Tis counted great policy to be on the strongest side; if we belong to the king of heaven, we are sure to be on the strongest side: the king of glory can with ease destroy his adversaries: he can pull down their pride, befool their policy, restrain their malice. That stone cut out of the mountains without hands, which smote the image, *Dan. ii. 34.* was an emblem (saith *Austin*) of Christ's monarchical power conquering and triumphing over his enemies. If we are on God's side, we are on the strongest side: he can with a word destroy his enemies, *Pf. ii. 5. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath.* Nay, he can with a look destroy them, *Job xl. 12. Look upon every one that is proud, and bring him low.* It needs cost God no more to confound those who rise up against him, than a look, a cast of his eye, *Exod. xiv. 24. In the morning-watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host, and took off their chariot-wheels.* What wisdom is it then to have this king to be ours? Then we are on the strongest side.

Use 2. Of Exhortation.

*Branch 1.* If God be so glorious a king, full of power and majesty, let us trust in him, *Pf. ix. 10. They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* Trust him with your soul; you cannot



cannot put this jewel in safer hands. And trust him with church and state-affairs: he is king, *Exod. xv. 3. The Lord is a man of war.* He can make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. If means fail, he is never at a loss; there are no impossibles with him; he can make the dry bones live, *Ezek. xxxvii. 10.* As a king he can command, and as a God he can create salvation, *Isa. lxxv. 18. I create Jerusalem a rejoicing.* Let us trust all our affairs with this great king. Either God can remove mountains, or can leap over them, *Can. ii. 8.*

*Branch 2.* If God be so great a king, let us fear him, *Jer. v. 22. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence?* We have enough of fear of man. Fear makes danger appear greater, and sin lesser; but let us fear the King of kings, who hath power to cast body and soul into hell, *Luke xii. 5.* As one wedge drives out another, so the fear of God would drive out all base carnal fear. Let us fear that God, whose throne is set above all kings; they may be mighty, but he is almighty. Kings have no power, but what God hath given them; their power is limited, his is infinite. Let us fear this king, whose eyes are as lamps of fire, *Rev. i. 14. The mountains quake at him; and the rocks are thrown down by him; Nahum i. 9.* If he stamps with his foot, all the creatures are presently up in a battalio to fight for him. O tremble and fear before this God: fear is janitor animæ, it is the door-keeper of the soul, it keeps sin from entering, *Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

*Branch 3.* If God be so glorious a king, he hath *jus vitæ & necis*, he hath the power of life and death in his hand. Let all the potentates of the earth take heed, how they employ their power against the king of heaven: they employ their power against God, who with their sceptre beat down his truth, which is the most orient pearl of his crown; who crush and persecute his people, who are the apple of his eye, *Zech. ii. 8.* Who trample upon his laws and royal edicts, which he hath set forth, *Pf. ii. 3.* What is a king without his laws? Let all that are invested with worldly power and grandeur, take heed how they oppose the King of glory: the Lord will be too hard for all that come against him, *Job xl. 9. Hast thou an arm like God? wilt thou measure arms with the Almighty? shall a little child go to fight with an archangel? Ezek. xxii. 14. Can thy heart endure, or can*

*thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?* Christ will put all his enemies at last under his feet, *Pf. cx. 1.* All the multitude of the wicked, who set themselves against God, shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by him till their blood comes forth. The King of glory will come off victor at last: men may set up their standard, but God always sets up his trophies of victory. The Lord hath a golden sceptre, and an iron rod, *Pf. ii. 9.* Those who will not bow to the one, shall be broken by the other.

*Branch 4.* Is God so great a king, having all power in heaven and earth in his hand? Let us learn subjection to him. Such as have gone on in sin, and by their impieties hung out a flag of defiance against the King of heaven, oh come in quickly, and make your peace, submit to God, *Pf. ii. 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.* Kiss Christ with a kiss of love, and a kiss of obedience: obey the King of heaven, when he speaks to you by his ministers and ambassadors, *2 Cor. v. 20.* When God bids you flee from sin, and espouse holiness, obey him; to obey is better than sacrifice. To obey God (saith Luther) is better than to work miracles. Obey God willingly, *Isa. i. 19.* That is the best obedience, that is cheerful, as that is the sweetest honey which drops out of the comb: obey God swiftly, *Zech. v. 9. I lift up mine eyes, and behold two women, and the wind was in their wings.* Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness; such should our obedience to God be. Obey the King of glory.

*Use III.* Comfort to those who are the subjects of the King of heaven; God will put forth all his royal power for their succour and comfort.

1. The King of heaven will plead their cause, *Jer. li. 36. I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee.*

2. He will protect his people: he sets an invisible guard about them, *Zech. ii. 5. I will be a wall of fire to her round about.* A wall, that is defensive; a wall of fire, that is offensive.

3. When it may be for the good of his people, he will raise up deliverance to them, *1 Chron. xi. 4. The Lord saved them by a great deliverance.* God reigning as a king, can save any way: by contemptible means, the blowing of trumpets, and blazing of lamps, *Judges vii. 20.* By contrary means, he made the sea a wall to Israel,

*Israel*, and the waters were a means to keep them from drowning. The fish's belly was a ship in which *Jonas* sailed safe to shore. God will never want ways of saving his people; rather than fail, the very enemies shall do his work, *2 Chron.* xx. 23. He set *Ammon* and *Mount Seir* one against another. And as God will deliver his people from temporal danger, so from spiritual, from sin, and from hell; *Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come*, *1 Thess.* i. 10.

*Use IV.* Terror to the enemies of the church. If God be king, he will set his utmost strength against them, who are the enemies of his kingdom, *Pf.* xcvi. 3. *A fire goes before him and burneth up his enemies round about.*

1. He will set himself against his enemies: he will set his attributes against them, his power and justice; and, *Who knows the power of his anger?* *Pf.* xc. 11.

2. God will set the creatures against them, *Judges* v. 20. The stars, in their course, fought against *Sisera*. *Tertullian* observes, that, the *Persians* fighting against the Christians, a mighty wind arose, which did make the *Persians* arrows to fly back in their own faces. Every creature hath a quarrel with a sinner: the stone out of the wall, *Hab.* ii. 11. The hail and the frost, *Pf.* lxxviii. 47. *He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore-trees with frost.*

3. God will set men against themselves. 1. He will set conscience against them; and how terrible is this rod, when turned into a serpent! *Melancthon* calls it *Erinnis conscientiae*, a hellish fury: it is called *vermis conscientiae*, the worm of conscience, *Mark* ix. 44. What a worm did *Spir* feel in his conscience? He was a terror to himself: the worst civil wars are between a man and his conscience. 2. God will set the diseases of mens bodies against them, *2 Chron.* xxi. 18. *The Lord smote Jehoram in his bowels with an incurable disease.* God can raise an army against a man, out of his own bowels: he can set one humour of the body against another; the heat to dry up the moisture, and the moisture to drown the heat: the Lord needs not go far for instruments to punish the sinner; he can make the joints of the same body to smite one against another, as *Dan.* v. 6. 3. God will set mens friends against them; where they used to have honey, they shall have nothing but aloes and wormwood. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he shall make his enemies to be his friends*, *Prov.* xvi. 7. But when he opposeth

God, he maketh his friends to be his enemies. *Commodus* the emperor, his own wife gave him poison in perfumed wine. *Sennacherib's* two sons were the death of him, *2 Kings* xix. 37. 4. God will set Satan against them, *Pf.* cix. 6. *Let Satan stand at his right-hand.* What doth Satan at the sinner's elbows? 1. He helps him to contrive sin. 2. He tempts him to commit sin. 3. He terrifies him for sin. He that hath Satan thus standing at his right-hand, is sure to be set at God's left-hand. Here is the misery of such as oppose God's royal sceptre, he will set every thing in the world against them: if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, sinners shall not be unpunished.

*Use last.* If God be such an absolute monarch, and crowned with such glory and majesty, let us all engage in his service, and stand up for his truth and worship; dare to own God in the world time; he is King of kings, and is able to reward all his servants; we may be losers for him, we shall never be losers by him. We are ready to say, as *Amaziah*, *2 Chron.* xxv. 9. *What shall I do for the hundred talents?* If I appear for God, I may lose my estate, my life: I say with the prophet, God is able to give you much more than this; he can give you, for the present, inward peace, and, for the future, a crown of glory which fades not away.

*Qu.* What kingdom doth Christ mean here?

*Ans. Negat.* 1. He doth not mean a political or earthly kingdom. The apostles indeed did desire, 1. Christ's temporal reign, *Acts* i. 6. *When wilt thou restore the kingdom to Israel?* but Christ said, his kingdom was not of this world, *John* xviii. 36. So that, when Christ taught his disciples to pray, *thy kingdom come*, he did not mean it of any earthly kingdom, that he should reign here in outward pomp and splendor. 2. It is not meant of God's providential kingdom, *Psal.* ciii. 19. *His kingdom ruleth over all*; that is, the kingdom of his providence. This kingdom we do not pray for, when we say, *Thy kingdom come*; for this kingdom is already come: God exerciseth the kingdom of his providence in the world, *Psal.* lxxv. 7. *He putteth down one, and setteth up another.* Nothing stirs in the world but God hath an hand in it: he sets every wheel a-working; he humbles the proud, and raiseth the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes, *1 Sam.* ii. 8. The kingdom of God's providence ruleth over all; kings do nothing but what his providence permits and orders, *Acts* iv. 27. This kingdom



of God's providence we do not pray should come, for it is already come. What kingdom then is meant here, when we say, *Thy kingdom come*? *Ans. Positively.* There is a twofold kingdom meant here. 1. The kingdom of grace, which kingdom God exerciseth in the consciences of his people: this is *regnum Dei mikron*, God's lesser kingdom, *Luke xvii. 21.* *The kingdom of God is within you.* 2. The kingdom of glory, which is sometimes called, the kingdom of God, *Luke vi. 20.* And the kingdom of heaven, *Matth. v. 3.* When we pray, *Thy kingdom come.* 1. Here is something tacitly implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness. 1. We pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness. 2. That the devil's kingdom in the world may be demolished. (2.) Something positively intended, *adveniat regnum gratiæ & gloriæ.* 1. We pray, that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts, and increased. 2. When we pray, *Thy kingdom come*; we pray, that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's good time, be translated into it. These two kingdoms of grace and glory, differ not specifically, but gradually; they differ not in nature, but only in degree. The kingdom of grace is nothing but the inclination or beginning of the kingdom of glory: the kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the flower: the kingdom of grace is glory in the day-break, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian: the kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connection between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no passing into the one kingdom but by the other. At *Athens* there were two temples, a temple of virtue and a temple of honour; and there was no going into the temple of honour, but through the temple of virtue: so the kingdoms of grace and glory are so close joined together, that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory, but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory, but never look after grace; but these two, which God hath joined together, may not be put asunder: the kingdom of grace leads to the kingdom of glory.

1. I begin with the first thing implied in this petition, *Thy kingdom come*: it is implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness; and we pray, that we may be brought out of the

kingdom of darkness: the state of nature is a kingdom of darkness: 'tis a kingdom; sin is said to reign, *Rom. vi. 12.* And 'tis a kingdom of darkness; it is called, *the power of darkness*, *Col. i. 13.* Man, before the fall, was illuminated with perfect knowledge, but this light is now eclipsed, and he is fallen into the kingdom of darkness.

*Qu. How many ways is a natural man in the kingdom of darkness?*

*Ans. 1.* He is under the darkness of ignorance, *Eph. iv. 18.* Having the understanding darkened. Ignorance is a black veil drawn over the mind: men by nature may have a deep reach in the things of the world, but ignorant in the things of God. *Nabash* the *Ammonite* would make a covenant with *Israel* to thrust out their right eyes, *1 Sam. xi. 2.* Since the fall our left eye remains, a deep insight into worldly matters; but our right eye is thrust out, we have no saving knowledge of God: something we know by nature, but nothing as we ought to know, *1 Cor. viii. 2.* Ignorance draws the curtains round about the soul, *1 Cor. ii. 14.*

2. A natural man is under the darkness of pollution: hence sinful actions are called *works of darkness*, *Rom. xiii. 12.* Pride and lust darken the glory of the soul: a sinner's heart is a dark conclave, it looks blacker than hell.

3. A natural man is under the darkness of misery; he is exposed to divine vengeance: and the sadness of this darkness, is, that men are not sensible of it: they are blind, yet they think they see: the darkness of *Egypt* was such thick darkness as might be felt, *Exod. x. 21.* Men are by nature in thick darkness, but here is the misery; the darkness cannot be felt; they will not believe they are in the dark, till they are past recovery.

*Use I.* See what the state of nature is, it is a kingdom of darkness, and it is a bewitching darkness, *John iii. 19.* Men loved darkness rather than light: as the *Athlantes* in *Ethiopia* curse the sun. Such as are still in the kingdom of darkness, tremble to think of this condition; this darkness of sin leads to the chains of darkness, *Jude 6.* What comfort can such take in earthly things? The *Egyptians* might have food, gold, silver; but they could take but little comfort in them, while they were in such darkness as might be felt; so the natural man may have riches and friends to delight in, yet he is in the kingdom of darkness, and how dead are

are all these comforts? Thou who art in the kingdom of darkness, knowest not whither thou goest. As the ox is driven to the shambles, but he knows not whither he goes; so the devil is driving thee before him to hell, but thou knowest not whither thou goest. Should thou die in thy natural estate, while thou art in the kingdom of darkness, blackness of darkness is reserved for thee, *Jude 13. To whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever.*

*Use II.* Let us pray that God will bring us out of this kingdom of darkness. God's kingdom of grace cannot come into our hearts, till first we are brought out of the kingdom of darkness? Who would desire to stay in a dark dungeon: O fear the chains of darkness, *Jude 6.* These chains are God's power, binding men as in chains under wrath for ever. O pray that God will deliver us out of the kingdom of darkness. 1. Be sensible of thy dark damned estate, that thou hast not one spark of fire to give thee light. 2. Go to Christ to enlighten thee, *Eph. v. 14. Christ shall give thee light*; he will not only bring thy light to thee, but open thine eyes to see it. That is the first thing implied, *thy kingdom come*; we pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness.

The second thing implied in *thy kingdom come*, we do implicitly pray against the devil's kingdom, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be demolished in the world. Satan's kingdom stands in opposition to Christ's kingdom; and when we pray, *Thy kingdom come*, we pray against Satan's kingdom. Satan hath a kingdom; he got his kingdom by conquest; he conquered mankind in paradise. He hath his throne, *Rev. ii. 13. Thou dwellest where Satan's throne is.* And his throne is set up in the hearts of men; he doth not care for their purses but their hearts, *Eph. ii. 2.* Satan is served upon the knee, *Rev. xii. 4. They worship the dragon*, that is, the devil. Satan's empire is very large; the most kingdoms in the world pay tribute to him. Satan's kingdom hath two qualifications or characters.

(1.) It is *regnum nequitiae*, a kingdom of impiety.

(2.) It is *regnum servitutis*, a kingdom of slavery. 1. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of impiety: nothing but sin goes up in his kingdom, murder and heresy, lust and treachery, oppression and division are the constant trade driven in Satan's kingdom; Satan is called *the unclean spirit*,

*Luke xi. 24.* What else is propagated in his kingdom but a mystery of iniquity?

2. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of slavery: Satan makes all his subjects slaves? *Peccati reus dura daemonis tyrannide, tenetur*, Muis. Satan is an usurper and a tyrant; he is a worse tyrant than any other. 1. Other tyrants do but rule over the body, but Satan's kingdom rules over the soul; Satan rides some men as we do horses. 2. Other tyrants have some pity on their slaves; though they make them work in the galleys, yet they give them meat, and let them have their hours for rest; but Satan is a merciless tyrant, he gives his slaves poison instead of meat, he gives them hurtful lusts to feed on, *1 Tim. vi. 9.* nor will he let his slaves have any rest, he tires them out in doing his drudgery, *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity.* When the devil had entered into Judas, he sends him to the high priests, and from thence to the garden, and never let him rest till he had betrayed Christ, and hanged himself. Thus Satan is the worst tyrant; when men have served him to their utmost strength, he will welcome them to hell with fire and brimstone.

*Use.* Let us pray that Satan's kingdom set up in the world may be thrown down. It is sad to think that though the devil's kingdom be so bad, yet that it should have so many to support it. Satan hath more to stand up for his kingdom, than Christ hath for his. What a large harvest of souls hath Satan? And God only a few gleanings. The Pope and the Turk give their power to Satan. If in God's visible church the devil hath so many loyal subjects that serve him with their lives and souls, then how do his subjects swarm in places of idolatry and paganism, where there is done to oppose him, but all vote on the devil's side? Men are willingly slaves to Satan; they will fight and die for him: therefore Satan is not only called the *prince of this world*, *John xiv. 30.* but the *god of this world*, *2 Cor. iv. 4.* To show what power Satan hath over men's souls. O let us pray, that God will break the sceptre of the devil's kingdom, that *Michael* may destroy the dragon, that by the help of a religious magistracy and ministry, the hellish kingdom of the prince of darkness may be beaten down. Satan's kingdom must be thrown down before Christ's kingdom can flourish in its power and majesty.

B b b

2. When



2. When we pray, *Thy kingdom come*; here is something positively intended.

1. We pray, that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts, and encreased.

2. That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's due time, be translated into it.

I begin with the first, the kingdom of grace. When we pray, *Thy kingdom come*, we pray 1. That the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts: this is *regnum Dei*, God's lesser kingdom, *Rom. xiv. 17. The kingdom of God is righteousness.* Luke xvii. 21. *The kingdom of God is within you.*

Qu. 1. Why is grace called a kingdom?

Ans. Because, when grace comes, there is a kingly government set up in the soul. Grace rules the will and affections, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ: grace doth king it in the soul; it sways the sceptre, it subdues mutinous lusts, and keeps the soul, in a spiritual decorum.

Qu. 2. Why is there such need that we should pray that this kingdom of grace come into our hearts?

Ans. 1. Because, till the kingdom of grace come, we have no right to the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is sweetned with love, bespangled with promises; the covenant of grace is our *magna charta*, by virtue of which God passeth himself over to us to be our God: but who are heirs of the covenant of grace? Only such as have the kingdom of grace in their hearts, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*; there is the kingdom of grace set up in the soul: then it follows, *ver. 28. I will be your God.* The covenant of grace is to an ungracious person a sealed fountain, it is kept as a paradise with a flaming sword, that the sinner may not touch it; without grace you have no more right to it than a farmer to the city-charter.

2. Unless the kingdom of grace be set up in our hearts, our purest offerings are defiled: they may be good as to the matter, but not as to the manner; they want that which should meliorate and sweeten them. Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, did carry a piece of holy flesh in his skirt, the holy flesh could not cleanse him, but he polluted that, *Hag. ii. 12.* Till the kingdom of grace be in our hearts, ordinances do not purify us, but we pollute them; the prayer of an ungra-

cious person becomes sin, *Prov. xv. 8.* In what a sad condition is a man before God's kingdom of grace be set up in his heart! whether he comes or comes not to the ordinance, he sins: if he doth not come to the ordinance, he is a contemner of it: if he doth come, he is a polluter of it; a sinner's works are *opera mortua*, dead works, *Heb. i. 6.* and those works which are dead cannot please God, a dead flower hath no sweetness.

3. We had need pray that the kingdom of grace may come, because till this kingdom come into our hearts, we are lothsome in God's eyes, *Zech. xi. 8. My soul lothed them. Quanta est faeditas vitiosae mentis.* Tully. An heart void of grace looks blacker than hell; sin transforms one into a devil, *John vi. 70. Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil?* Envy is the devil's eye, hypocrisy is his cloven foot; thus it is before the kingdom of grace come. So deformed is a graceless person, that when once he sees his own filth and leprosy, the first thing he does is to lothe himself, *Ezek. xx. 43. Ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils.* I have read of a woman, who always used flattering-glasses; by chance seeing her face in a true glass in *insaniam delapsa est*, she ran mad. Such as now dress themselves by the flattering glass of presumption, when once God gives them a sight of their filthiness, they will abhor themselves; *Ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils.*

4. Before the kingdom of grace comes into us, we are spiritually illegitimate, of the bastard-brood of the old serpent, *John viii. 44.* To be illegitimate is the greatest infamy, *Deut. xxii. 2. A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation.* He was to be kept out of the holy assemblies of Israel as an infamous creature: a bastard, by the law, cannot inherit. Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, a person is to God as one illegitimate; and so continuing, he cannot enter into the congregation of heaven.

5. Before the kingdom of grace be set up in mens hearts, the kingdom of Satan is up in them: they are said to be *under the power of Satan*, *Acts xxvi. 18.* Satan commands the will; though he cannot force the will, he can, by his subtil temptations, draw it: the devil is said to take *men captive at his will*, *2 Tim. ii. 26.* the Greek word signifies to take them alive, as the fowler doth the bird in the snare. The sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house, *Mat.*

**xli. 44.** *I will go to my house.* It is *officina Diaboli*, Satan's shop, where he works, *Eph. ii. 2.* *The prince of the air now worketh in the children of disobedience.* The members of the body are the tools which Satan works with: Satan possesseth men. In Christ's time many had their bodies possessed, but it is far worse to have their souls possessed: one is possessed with an unclean devil, another with a revengeful devil. No wonder the ship goes full sail, when the wind blows; no wonder men go full sail in sin, when the devil, the prince of the air, blows them: thus it is; till the kingdom of grace come, men are under the power of Satan, who, like *Draco*, writes all his laws in blood.

6. Till the kingdom of grace comes, a man lies exposed to the wrath of God; and *who knows the power of his anger?* *Pf. xc. 11.* If, when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what then will it be, when God stirs up all his anger? So unconceivably torturing is God's wrath, that the wicked call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from it, *Rev. vi. 1.* The hellish torments are compared to a fiery lake, *Rev. xx. 15.* Other fire is but painted in comparison of this: and this lake of fire burns for ever. *Mark ix. 44.* God's breath kindles this fire, *Isa. xxx. 33.* And, where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it? Time will not finish it, tears will not quench it. To this fiery lake are men exposed; till the kingdom of grace be set up in them.

7. Till the kingdom of grace come, men cannot die with comfort; only he who takes Christ in the arms of his faith, can look death in the face with joy. But it is sad to have the king of terrors in the body, and not the kingdom of grace in the soul. 'Tis a wonder every graceless person doth not die distracted: what will a grace-despiser do, when death comes to him with a writ of habeas corpus? Hell follows death, *Rev. vi. 8.* *Behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed him.* Thus you see what need we have to pray that the kingdom of grace may come. He that dies without grace, I may say as Christ, *Matth. xxvi. 24.* *It had been good for that man he had not been born.* Few do believe the necessity of having the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, as appears by this, because they are so well content to live without it. Doth that man believe the necessity of a

pardon, that is content to be without it? most people, if they may have trading, and may sit quietly under their vine and fig-trees, they are in their kingdom, though they have not the kingdom of God within them. If the candle of prosperity shine upon their head, they care not whether the grace of God shine in their hearts: do these men believe the necessity of grace? Were they convinced how needful it were to have the kingdom of God within them, they would cry out as the Jaylor, *Acts vi. 30.* *What shall I do to be saved?*

**Qu. 3.** *How may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?*

**Ans.** It concerns us to examine this, our salvation depends upon it; and we had need be curious in the search, because there is something looks like grace, which is not, *Gal. vi. 3.* *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* Many think they have the kingdom of grace come into their heart, and it is only a chymera, a golden dream. *Quam multi cum vana spe descendunt ad inferas!* Aug. *Zeuxis* did paint grapes so lively, that he deceived the living birds. There are many deceits about grace.

**Deceit (1.)** Men think they have the kingdom of grace in their hearts, because they have the means of grace; they live where the silver trumpet of the gospel sounds, they are lift up to heaven with ordinances, *Judg. xvii. 13.* *I have a Levite to my priest, sure I shall go to heaven.* The Jews cried, *Jer. vii. 4.* *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;* we are apt to glory in this, the oracles of God are committed to us, we have word and sacrament: alas! this is a fallacy; we may have the means of grace, yet the kingdom of grace may not be set up in our hearts; we may have the kingdom of God come nigh us, *Luke xi. 20.* but not into us; the sound of the word in our ears, but not the savour of it in our hearts. Many of the Jews, who had Christ for their preacher, were never the better: hot clothes will not put warmth into a dead man. Thou mayest have hot clothes, warm and lively preaching, yet be spiritually dead, *Mat. viii. 12.* *The children of the kingdom shall be cast out.*

**Deceit 2.** Men think they have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, because they have some common works of the spirit.

(1.) They have great enlightnings of mind, profound knowledge, and almost speak like angels dropped from heaven: but the apostle sup-



poseth a case, that after men have been enlightened they may fall away, *Heb. 6.*

*Qu. But wherein doth this illumination come short?*

*Ans.* The illumination of hypocrites is not virtual, it doth not leave an impression of holiness behind; it is like weak physic, that will not work. The mind is enlightened, but the heart is not renewed. A christian that is all head, but no feet, he doth not walk in the ways of God.

(2.) Men have had convictions and stirrings of conscience for sin, they have seen the evil of their ways, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come; but, I say, convictions, though they are a step towards grace, yet they are not grace. Had not *Pharaoh* and *Judas* convictions? *Exod. x. 16.*

*Qu. What makes convictions prove abortive? Wherein is the defect?*

*Ans.* 1. They are not deep enough: a sinner never saw himself lost without Christ: the seed that wanted depth of earth withered, *Mat. xiii. 5.* These convictions are like blossoms blown off before they come to maturity. 2. These convictions are involuntary; the sinner doth what he can to stifle these convictions; he drowns them in wine and mirth; he labours to get rid of them: as the deer, when it is shot, runs and shakes out the arrow; so doth he the arrow of conviction: or as the prisoner that files off his fetters, and breaks loose; so a man breaks loose from his convictions. His corruptions are stronger than convictions.

(3.) Men have had some kind of humiliation, and have shed tears for their sins, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come into their hearts. But this is no infallible sign of grace; *Saul* wept, *Ahab* humbled himself.

*Qu. Why is not humiliation grace? Wherein doth it come short?*

*Ans.* 1. Tears in the wicked do not spring from love to God, but are forced by affliction, *Gen. iv. 13.* as water that drops from the still is forced by the fire. The tears of sinners are forced by God's fiery judgments. 2. They are deceitful tears; *lacrymae mentiri doctae*: men weep, yet go on in sin; they do not drown their sins in their tears.

(4.) Men have begun some reformation, therefore sure now the kingdom of grace is come; but there may be deceit in this; 1. A man may leave his oaths and drunkenness, yet still be in love with sin; he may leave his sin out of fear of

hell, or because it brings shame and penury, but still his heart goes after it, *Hos. iv. 8.* They set their hearts on their iniquity; as *Lot's* wife left *Sodom*, but still her heart was in *Sodom*. Hypocrites are like the snake which casts her coat; but keeps her poison: they keep the love of sin, as one that hath been long suitor to another; though his friends break off the match, yet still he hath a hankering love to her. 2. It may be a partial reformation; he may leave off one sin, and live in another; he may refrain drunkenness, and live in covetousness; he may refrain swearing, and live in the sin of slander; one devil may be cast out, and another as bad may come in his room. 3. A man may forsake gross sins, but have no reluctance against heart-sins; *motus primo primi*, proud, lustful thoughts; though he damns up the stream, he lets alone the fountain. O therefore if there be so many deceits, and men may think the kingdom of grace, is come into their hearts, when it is not, how curious and critical had we need be in our search, whether we have the kingdom of grace really come into our hearts? If a man be deceived in the title of his land, it is but the loss of his estate; but if he be deceived about his grace, it is the loss of his soul. I should now come to answer this question, how we may know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?

*Qu. How may we know the kingdom of grace is set up in us?*

*Ans.* 1. In general, by having a metamorphosis or change wrought in the soul; this is called the *new creature*, *2 Cor. v. 17.* The faculties are not new, but there is a new nature; as the strings of a lute are the same, but the tune is altered. When the kingdom of grace is set up, there is light in the mind, order in the affections, pliability in the will, tenderness in the conscience: such as can find no change of heart, they are the same as they were; as vain, as earthly, as unclean as ever; there is no sign of God's kingdom of grace in them.

2. More particularly, we may know the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts, 1. By having unfeigned desires after God: this is the smoking flax Christ will not quench. A true desire of grace is grace: by the beating of this pulse, conclude there is life, *Neh. i. 11.* O Lord, let thy ear be attentive to the prayers of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name. But may not an hypocrite have good desires? *Numb. xxiii. 10.* Let me die the death of the righteous.

righteous. Therefore, I say, unfeigned desires evidence the kingdom of God within a man.

Qn. But how may these unfeigned desires be known?

1. An unfeigned desire is ingenuous; we desire God *propter se*, for himself, for his intrinsic excellencies, and the orieny of his beauty which shines: the favour of Christ's ointments (*i. e.*) his graces, draw the virgins desires after him, *Cant. i. 3.* A true saint desires Christ, not only for what he hath, but for what he is; not only for his rewards, but for his holiness. No hypocrite can thus desire God; he may desire him for his jewels, but not for his beauty.

2. An unfeigned desire is unsatiable, it cannot be satisfied without God; let the world heap her honour and riches, they will not satisfy. Not flowers or music will content him who is thirsty: nothing will quench the soul's thirst but the blood of Christ; he faints away, his heart breaks with longing for God, *Pf. lxiv. 2. and cxix. 20.*

3. An unfeigned desire is active, it flourisheth into endeavour, *Isa. xxvi. 9. With my soul have I desired thee, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.* A soul that desires aright, faith, Christ I must have, grace I must have, I will have heaven, though I take it by storm: he who desires water, will let down the bucket into the well to draw it up.

4. An unfeigned desire is superlative: we desire Christ, not only more than the world, but more than heaven, *Pf. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Heaven itself would not satisfy without Christ; Christ is the diamond in the ring of glory: if God should say to the soul, I will put thee into heaven, but I will hide my face from thee, I will draw a curtain between, that thou shalt not behold my glory; the soul would not be satisfied, but say, as *Abalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 32. Now therefore let me see the king's face.*

5. An unfeigned desire is gradual; it increaseth as the sun in the horizon; a little of God will not satisfy, but the pious soul desireth still more: a drop of water is not enough for the thirsty traveller. Though a Christian is thankful for the least degree of grace, yet he is not satisfied with the greatest; still he thirsts for more of Christ, and his spirit. Desire is an holy dropsie: a saint would have more knowledge, more sanctity, more of Christ's presence. A glimpse of Christ through the lattice of an ordinance is sweet; and now the soul will

never leave longing till it sees him face to face: He desires to have grace perfected in glory. *Dulcissimi Deo totus immergi cupit & inviscerari:* he would be swallowed up in God, and be ever bathing himself in those perfumed waters of pleasure, which run at his right-hand for ever. Sure this unfeigned desire after God, is a blessed sign that the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, the beating of this pulse shows life. *Est a Deo ut bene velimus,* Aug. If iron move upward contrary to its nature, it is a sign some loadstone hath been there drawing it; if the soul move towards God in unfeigned desires, 'tis a sign the loadstone of the spirit hath been drawing it. 2. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the princely grace of faith. *Fides est sanctissima humani pectoris,* Gemma.---Faith cuts us off from the wild olive of nature: and ingrafts us into Christ: faith is the vital artery of the soul. *Heb. x. 38. The just shall live by faith.* Faith makes an holy adventurer on Christ's merits; when this faith, as a princely grace reigns in the soul, now the kingdom of God is come into us. The Hebrew word for faith comes from a *radix*, which signifies, to nourish: faith nourisheth the soul, and is the nurse of all the graces. But, who will not say, he is a believer? *Simon Magus* believed, *Acts viii. 13.* Yet was in the gall of bitterness. The hypocrite can put on faith's mantle, as the devil did *Samuel's*. How shall we know therefore that our faith is sound, that it is the faith of the operation of God, *Col. ii. 12.* And so that the kingdom of God is within us?

*Ans. 1.* True faith is wrought by the ministry of the word, *Rom. x. 17. Faith comes by hearing.* Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. Let us examine how was our faith wrought? Did God in the ministry of the word humble us? Did he break up the fallow-ground of our heart, and then cast in the seed of faith? A good sign: but, if you know not how you came by your faith suspect men to have stolen goods, where they know not how they came by them.

2. True faith is at first minute and small, like a grain of mustard-seed: it is full of doubts and fears; it is smoking flax; it smokes with desire, but doth not flame with comfort; it is so small that a Christian can hardly discern whether he hath faith or no.

3. True faith is long in working, *non fit instanti*-----it costs many searchings of heart, many



many prayers and tears; there is a spiritual combat: the soul suffers many sore pangs of humiliation before the child of faith be born. They whose faith is *per saltum*, they leap out of sin into a confidence that Christ is theirs: I say, as *Isaac* concerning his son's venison, *Gen. xxvii. 20. How is it that thou hast found it so quickly? How is it that thou comest by thy faith so soon?* The seed in the parable which sprung up suddenly withered, *Mark iv. 5. Solent prœcocia subito flaccescere.*

4. True faith is joined with sanctity: as a little bezoar is strong in operation, and a little musk sweetens; so a little faith purifies, *1 Tim. iii. 9. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.* Faith, though it doth but touch Christ, fetcheth an healing virtue from him. Justifying faith doth that, in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doth; it removes the mountains of sin, and casts them into the sea of Christ's blood.

5. True faith will trust God without a pawn. Tho' a christian be cut short in provisions, the fig-tree doth not blossom, yet he will trust in God: *Fidei famem non formidat*---Faith fears not fame. God hath given us his promise as his bond, *Pf. xxxvii. 3. Verily thou shalt be fed.* Faith puts this bond in suit; God will rather work a miracle, than his promise shall fail. He hath cause to suspect his faith, who saith, he trusts God for the greater, but dares not trust him for the lesser; he trusts God for salvation, but dares not trust him for a livelihood.

6. True faith is prolific, it brings forth fruit; faith hath *Rachel's* beauty, and *Leah's* fruitfulness. *Fides pinguefcit operibus*, Luther. Faith is full of good works. Faith believes as if it did not work, and it works as if it did not believe; faith is the spouse-like grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears. By having such a faith, we may know the kingdom of God is within us; grace is certainly in our hearts.

3. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the noble grace of love: faith and love are the two poles on which all religion turns, *Cant. i. 4. The upright love thee.* True love is to love God out of choice: love turns the soul into a seraphim; it makes it burn in a flame of affection: love is the truest touchstone of sincerity: love is the queen of the graces, it commands the whole soul, *2 Cor. v. 4.* If our love to God be genuine and real, we let him have the supremacy; we set

him in the highest room of our soul; we give him the purest of our love, *Cant. viii. 2. I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.* If the spouse had any thing better than other, a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that: we give the creature the milk of our love, but God the cream. In short, if we love God aright, we love his laws; we love his picture drawn in the saints, by the pencil of the holy Ghost; we love his presence in the ordinances. *Sleidan* saith, the protestants in *France* had a church which they called paradise; as if they thought themselves in paradise, while they had God's presence in his sanctuary. The soul that loves God, loves his appearing, *2 Tim. iv. 8.* It will be a glorious appearing to the saints, when their union with Christ shall be compleat, then their joy shall be full. The bride longs for the marriage-day: *The Spirit and the bride say, come: even so come, Lord Jesus, Rev. xxii. 17.* By this sacred love we may know the kingdom of God is within us.

4. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by spiritualizing the duties of religion, *1 Pet. ii. 5. Ye are an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.* Spiritualizing duty consists in three things,

(1.) Fixedness of mind. (2.) Fervency of devotion. (3.) Uprightness of aim.

1. Fixedness of mind: then we spiritualize duty, when our minds are fixed on God, *1 Cor. vii. 35. That you may attend on the Lord without distraction.* Tho' impertinent thoughts sometimes come into the heart in duty, yet they are not allowed, *Pf. cxix. 13. They come as unwelcome guests, which are no sooner spied but they are turned out.*

2. Fervency of devotion, *Rom. xii. 11. Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* 'Tis a metaphor alludes to water that seethes and boils over; so the affections boil over, the eyes melt in tears, the heart flows in holy ejaculations. We not only bring our offering to God, but our hearts.

3. Uprightness of aim. An heart that is upright hath three ends in duty: 1. That he may grow more like God: as *Moses* on the mount had some of God's glory reflected on him, *his face shined.* 2. That he may have more communion with God, *1 John i. 6. Our fellowship is with the Father.* 3. That he may bring more glory to God, *1 Pet. iv. 11. and Phil. i. 20: That Christ may be magnified.* Sincerity aims

aims at God in all; tho' we shoot short, yet we take a right aim: this is a sure evidence of grace, the spiritualizing duty. The spirits of wine are best, so is the spiritual part of duty. A little spiritualness in duty is better than all the gildings of the temple, or outward pompous worship, which doth so dazzle carnal eyes.

5. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, by antipathy and opposition against every known sin, *Pf. cxix. 104. I hate every false way.* Hatred is [*Gr. Prosta gene, Arist.*] against the whole kind: hatred is implacable: anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot. A gracious soul not only forsakes sin (as a man forsakes his country never to return to it more) but hates sin; as there is an antipathy between the crocodile and the scorpion. If the kingdom of God be within us, we not only hate sin for hell, but we hate it as hell, as being contrary to God's holiness and our happiness.

6. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, when we have given up ourselves to God by obedience; as a servant gives up himself to his master, as a wife gives up herself to her husband, so we give up ourselves to God by obedience: and this obedience is, 1. Free; as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb. 2. Uniform; we obey God in one thing as well as another, *Pf. cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed: or, as it is in the Hebrew, I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments.* A good christian is like a pair of compasses, one foot of the compass stands upon the centre, the other part of it goes round the circle; so a christian by faith stands on God the centre, and by obedience goes round the circle of God's commandments: a sign the kingdom of grace is not come into the heart; when it doth not reign there by universal obedience. Hypocrites would have Christ to be their saviour, but they pluck the government from his shoulders, they will not have him rule: but he who hath the kingdom of God within him, submits cheerfully to every command of God; he will do what God will have him do; he will be what God will have him be: he puts a blank paper into God's hand, and saith, *Lord, write what thou wilt, I will subscribe.* Blessed is he that can find all those things in his soul, *He is all glorious within, Pf. xlv. 13.* He carries a kingdom about him, and this kingdom of grace will certainly bring to a kingdom of glory.

I shall answer some doubts and objections, a christian may make against himself.

*Obj. I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come into my heart.*

*Ans.* When a christian is under temptation, or grace lies dormant, he is not fit to be his own judge; but in this case he must take the witness of others who have the spirit of discerning. But let us hear a christian's objections against himself, why he thinks the kingdom of grace is not yet come into his heart.

*Obj. 1. I cannot discern grace.*

*Ans.* A child of God may have the kingdom of grace in his heart, yet not know it. The cup was in Benjamin's sack, tho' he did not know it was there; thou mayest have faith in thy heart, the cup may be in thy sack, tho' thou knowest it not. Old Jacob wept for his son Joseph, when Joseph was alive; thou mayest weep for want of grace, when grace may be alive in thy heart. The seed may be in the ground, when we do not see it spring up; the seed of God may be sown in thy heart, tho' thou dost not perceive the springing of it up. Think not grace is lost, because it is hid.

*Obj. 2. Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, there must be some preparation for it: the fallow ground of the heart must be broken up: I fear the plow of the law hath not gone deep enough, I have not been humbled enough, therefore I have no grace.*

*Ans.* God doth not prescribe a just proportion of sorrow and humiliation: the scripture mentions the truth of sorrow, but not the measure. Some are more flagitious sinners than others, these must have a greater degree of humiliation. A knotty piece of timber requires more wedges to be driven into it. Some stomachs are fouler than others, therefore need stronger physic. But wouldst thou know when thou hast been humbled enough for sin? 1. When thou art weary of thy sin, and sick of love to Christ: what doth God require sorrow for, but as sauce to make sin relish bitter, and Christ sweet? 2. When thou art willing to let go thy sins. Then the gold hath lien long enough in the furnace, when the dross is purged out; so, when the love of sin is purged out, a soul is humbled enough to divine acception, tho' not to divine satisfaction. Now, if thou art humbled enough, (tho' not so much as others) what needs more? *Frustra fit per plura, &c.* If a needle will let out the imposthume, what needs a lance? Be not more cruel to thyself than God would have thee.

*Obj. 3. If the kingdom of God were within me,*



*me, it would be a kingdom of power ; it would enable me to serve God with vigour of soul : but I have a spirit of infirmity upon me, I am weak and impotent, and untuned to every holy action.*

*Ans.* There is a great difference between the weakness of grace, and the want of grace : a man may have life, tho' he be sick and weak. Weak grace is not to be despised, but cherished : Christ will not break the bruised reed. Do not argue from the weakness of grace to the nullity.

1. Weak grace will give us a title to Christ, as well as a strong. Weak faith justifies as well as strong. A weak hand of faith will receive the alms of Christ's mercies.

2. Weak faith is capable of growth. The seed springs up by degrees, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the end ; the faith that is strongest was once in its infancy. Grace is like the waters of the sanctuary, which did rise higher and higher : be not discouraged at thy weak faith ; tho' it be now but blossoming, it will by degrees come to more maturity.

3. The weakest grace shall persevere, as well as the strongest. A sucking child was safe in the ark, as *Noah*. An infant-believer, that is but newly laid to the breast of a promise, is as safe in Christ, as the most eminent heroick saint.

*Obj.* 4. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come, because I find the kingdom of sin so strong in me. Had I faith, it would purify my heart ; but, I find much pride, worldliness, passion.*

*Ans.* The best of the saints have remainders of corruption, *Dan. vii. 12. They had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season.* So in the regenerate, tho' the dominion of sin be taken away, yet the life it is prolonged for a season. What pride was there in Christ's own disciples, when they strove which should be greatest ? the issue of sin will not be quite stopped till death. The Lord is pleased to let the in-being of sin continue, to humble his people, and make them prize Christ the more ; but, because you find corruptions stirring, do not therefore presently unsaint your selves, and deny the kingdom of grace to be come into your souls. That you feel sin, is an evidence of spiritual life ; that you mourn for sin, what are these tears but fruits of love to God ? that you have a combat with sin, argues

antipathy against it : those sins which you did once were as a crown on your head, are now as fetters on the leg ; is not all this from the spirit of grace in you ? sin is in you, as poison in the body, which you are sick of, and use all scripture antidotes to expel. Should we condemn all those who have the indwelling of sin, nay, who have had sin, (at some times) prevailing, we should blot some of the best saints out of the bible.

*Obj.* 5. *Where the kingdom of grace comes, it softens the heart : but I find my heart frozen and congealed into hardness, I can hardly squeeze out one tear. Do flowers grow on a rock ? can there be any grace in such a rocky heart ?*

*Ans.* 1. There may be grief where there are no tears ; the best sorrow is rational. In your judgment you esteem sin the most hyberbolical evil, you have a disgust and displacency against sin ; this is a rational sorrow, and such as God will accept.

1. A christian may have some hardness in his heart, yet not have an hard heart ; *subjeetum a præstantiori parte.* A field may have tares in it, yet we call it a field of wheat ; in the best heart is a mixture of hardness, yet because there is some softness and melting, God looks upon it as a soft heart : therefore, christian, dispute not against thyself, if thou canst find but one thing, *That the frame and temper of thy soul be holy.* Art thou still breathing after God, delighting in him ? is the completion of thy soul heavenly ? canst thou say, as *David*, *Pf. cxxxix. 17. When I awake, I am still with thee ?* As colours laid in oil, or a statue carved in gold, abide, so doth an holy complexion ; the soul is still pointing towards God. If it be thus with thee, assure thyself the kingdom of grace is come into the soul ; be not unkind to God, to deny any work of his spirit which he hath wrought in thee.

*Use* 1. *Of exhortation.* Labour to find that this kingdom of grace is set up in your hearts : while others aspire after earthly kingdoms, labour to have the kingdom of God within you *Luke xvii. 21.* The kingdom of grace must come into us, before we can go into the kingdom of glory. *Motives.*

1st. *Motive.* This kingdom of God within us is our spiritual beauty : the kingdom of grace adorns a person, and sets him off in the eyes of God and angels. This makes the kings daughter all glorious within, *Pf. xlv. 13.* Grace sheds

sheds a glory and lustre upon the soul. As the diamond to the ring, so is grace to the soul. An heart beautified with grace, hath the king of heaven's picture hung in it.

2. *Motive.* The kingdom of grace set up in the heart is our spiritual defence. Grace is called the *Armour of light*, Rom. xiii. 12. It is *light* for beauty, and *armour* for defence. He who hath the kingdom of grace within him, is *strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power*, Col. i. 11. he hath the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast-plate of righteousness: this armour can never be shot through, it fortifies a christian against the assaults of temptation, and the terrors of hell.

3d. *Motive.* The kingdom of grace set up in the heart brings peace with it, Rom. xiv. 17. *The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace.* There is a secret peace breeds out of holiness. Peace is the best blessing of a kingdom: *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior.* The kingdom of grace is a kingdom of peace; grace is the root, peace is the flower grows out of it; it is *pax in procella*, such peace that no worldly affliction can shake. The doors of Solomon's temple were made of olive-tree, carved with open flowers, 1 Kings vi. 32. in a gracious heart is the olive of peace, and the open flowers of joy.

4th *Motive.* The kingdom of grace enricheth the soul: a kingdom hath its riches. A believer is said to be rich in faith, James ii. 4. How rich is he who hath God for his God, who is heir to all the promises? Heb. vi. 17. A man may be rich in bills and bonds; a believer, tho' he may say as *Peter*, *Silver and gold have I none*, Acts iii. 6. yet he is rich in bills and bonds, he is heir to all God's promises; and to be heir to the promise, is better than to be heir to the crown.

5th *Motive.* When the kingdom of grace comes, it doth fix and establish the heart, Ps. lvii. 7. *O God, my heart is fixed.* Before the kingdom of grace comes, the heart is very unfixed and unsettled; like a ship without a ballast, like quicksilver that cannot be made to fix: but when the kingdom of grace comes, it doth *stabilire animum*, it fixeth the heart upon God; and when the heart is fixed, it rests quiet as in its centre.

6th *Motive.* This kingdom of grace is distinguishing; it is a sure pledge of God's love. God may give kingdoms in anger; but wherever the kingdom of grace is set up, it is in love;

God cannot give grace in anger. The crown always goes with this kingdom; let us therefore be ambitious of this kingdom of grace.

Qu. *How shall we do to obtain this kingdom?*

Ans. 1. In general, take pains for it: we cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have grace? *If thou seekest her as silver*, Prov. ii. 3. A man may as well expect a crop without sowing, as grace without labour. We must not think to have grace as *Israel* had manna; they did not plow or sow, but it was rained down from heaven upon them: no, we must *operam dare*, take pains for grace. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat.

2. Let us go to God to set up this kingdom of grace in our hearts; God is called, *the God of all grace*, 1 Pet. v. 10. Say, Lord, I want this kingdom of grace, I want an humble, believing heart, O enrich me with grace, let thy kingdom come; and be importunate suitors. As *Achish* said to her father *Caleb*, Josh. xv. 19. *Thou hast given me a south-land, give me also springs of water*: so, Lord, thou hast given me enough of the world, here is a south-land; but, Lord, give me the upper-springs of grace, let thy kingdom come. What is the venison thou hast given me, without the blessing? When we are importunate with God, and will take no denial, then he will set up his kingdom within us.

3. Keep close to the word preached: the word preached is *virga virtutis*, the rod of God's strength; it is the great engine God useth for the setting up the kingdom of grace in the heart, Rom. x. 17. *Faith comes by hearing.* Though God could work grace immediately by his Spirit, or by the ministry of angels from heaven, yet he chooseth to work by the word preached; this is the usual means by which he sets up the kingdom of grace in the heart; and the reason is, because he hath put his divine sanction upon it, he hath appointed it for the means of working grace, and he will honour his own ordinance, 1 Cor. i. 21. What reason could be given why the waters of *Damascus* should not have as sovereign virtue to heal *Naaman's* leprosy, as the waters of *Jordan*? only this, because God did appoint and sanctify the waters of *Jordan* to heal, and not the other: therefore let us keep the word preached, because the power of God goes along with it.



*Use II.* Such as have this kingdom of God set up in them, it calls for gratulation and thanksgiving: what will you be thankful for, if not for a kingdom? Grace is the best blessing, it is the result and product of God's electing love: God, in setting up his kingdom of grace, hath done more for you, than if he had made you kings and queens; for now you are born of God, and of the blood-royal of heaven. O admire and exalt free-grace; *make God's praise glorious*, Ps. lxvi. 2. The apostle seldom mentions the work of grace, but he joins praise, Col. i. 12. *Giving thanks to the father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.* If God hath crowned you with the kingdom of grace, do you crown him with your praises.

2. The second thing intended by our Saviour in this petition is, that the kingdom of grace may increase, that it may come more into us: and this may answer a question.

*Qu. Why do we pray, thy kingdom come, when the kingdom of grace is already come into the soul?*

*Ans.* Though the kingdom of grace be already come into us, yet still we must pray, *thy kingdom come*; namely, that grace may be increased, and that this kingdom may flourish still more in our souls. Till we come to live among the angels, we shall need to pray this prayer, *thy kingdom come*; Lord, let thy kingdom of grace come in more power into my soul, let grace be more augmented and increased.

*Qu. (1.) When doth the kingdom of grace increase in the soul? When is it a flourishing kingdom?*

*Ans.* When a Christian hath further degrees added to his graces; there is more oil in the lamp, his knowledge is clearer, his love is more enflamed: grace is capable of degrees, and may rise higher as the sun in the horizon. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who *received the spirit without measure*, John iii. 34. Christ could not be more holy than he was; but our grace is receptive of further degrees, we may have more sanctity, we may add more cubits to our spiritual stature.

2. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath gotten more strength than he had, *Job xvii. 9. He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger*, Heb. *He shall add to his strength.* A Christian hath strength to resist temptation, to forgive his ene-

mies, to suffer affliction. 'Tis not easy to suffer; a man must deny himself before he take up the cross. The way to heaven is like the way which *Jonathan* and his armour-bearer had in climbing up a steep place, *1 Sam. xiv. 4. There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other.* It requires much strength to climb up this rocky way. That grace which will carry us through prosperity, will not carry us through sufferings: the ship needs stronger tackling to carry it through a storm than a calm. Now, when we are so strong in grace, that we can bear up under affliction, without murmuring or fainting; here is the kingdom of grace increased. What mighty strength of grace had he, who told the emperor *Valentinian*, you may take away my life, but you cannot take away my love to the truth.

3. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath most conflict with spiritual corruptions, he not only abstains from gross evils, but hath a combat with inward, hidden, close corruptions; as pride, envy, hypocrisy, vain thoughts, carnal confidence: these are spiritual wickednesses, and do both defile and disturb, *2 Cor. vii. 1. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.* Which shows there are two sorts of corruptions, one of the flesh, the other of the spirit. When we grieve for, and combat with spiritual sin (as being the root of all gross sins) now, the kingdom of grace increaseth, and spreads its territories in the soul.

4. Then the kingdom of grace flourisheth, when a Christian hath learned to live by faith, *Gal. ii. 20. I live by the faith of the Son of God.* There is the habit of faith, and the drawing of this habit into exercise: for a Christian to graft his hope of salvation, only upon the stock of Christ's righteousness, and make Christ all in justification; to live on the promises, as the bee on the flower, and suck out the sweetness of them; to trust God where we cannot trace him; to believe his love thro' a frown: to persuade ourselves, when he hath the face of an enemy, yet he hath the heart of a father: when we are arrived at this, here is the kingdom of grace flourishing in our souls.

5. When a Christian is arrived at holy zeal, *Numb. xxv. 13. Phineas was zealous for his God.* Zeal is the flame of the affections, it turns a saint into a seraphim: a zealous Christian



tion is impatient when God is dishonoured, *Rev. ii. 2.* He will wrestle with difficulties, he will swim to Christ through a sea of blood, *Acts xxi. 13.* Zeal loves truth when it is despised and opposed, *Pf. cxix. 126.* *They have made void thy law, therefore I love thy law.* Here is grace increasing, like the sun in the horizon. Zeal resembles the Holy Ghost, *Acts ii. 2.* *There appeared cloven tongues like as fire, and it sat upon each of them.* Tongues of fire were an emblem of that fire of zeal, which the spirit poured upon them.

6. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian is as well diligent in his particular calling, as devout in his general. He is the wise Christian, that carries things equally; that doth so live by faith, that he lives in a calling. Therefore it is worth our notice, when the apostle had exhorted the *Thessalonians* to increase in grace, *1 Thess. iv. 10.* He presently adds, *v. 11.* *And that you do your own business, and work with your hands.* This is a sign grace is increasing, when christians go cheerfully about their calling. Indeed to be all the day in the mount with God, and to have the mind fixed on glory, is more sweet to a man's self, and is an heaven upon earth: but to be conversant in our callings, is more profitable to others. I may allude to that of *St. Paul.* To be with Christ is best for me; yet to abide here is more needful for you, *Phil. i. 24.* So, to converse with God in prayer and sweet meditation all the week long, is more for the comfort of a man's own person; but to be sometimes employed in the business of a calling, is more profitable for the family to which he belongs. It is not good to be as the lilies, which toil not, neither do they spin. It shows the increase of grace, when a Christian keeps a due decorum: he joins piety and industry, when zeal runs forth in religion, and diligence is put forth in a calling.

7. Then the kingdom of grace encreaseth, when a Christian is established in the belief and love of the truth. The heart by nature is a ship without ballast, it wavers and fluctuates. *Beza* writes of one *Bolezius*, his religion changed as the moon and planet *Mercury.* Such as are wandering stars, will be falling stars: but when a soul is built on the rock Christ, and no winds of temptation can blow it away, now the kingdom of grace flourisheth. One calls *Athanasius*, *Adamas Ecclesiae*, an invincible adamant, in respect of his stability in the truth, *Col. ii. 7.*

Rooted and built up in him; the rooting of a tree evidenceth the growth.

8. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth in a man's own heart, when he labours to be instrumental to set up this kingdom in others. Though it is the greatest benefit to have grace wrought in ourselves, yet it is the greatest honour to be instrumental to work it in others, *Gal. iv. 19.* *Of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you.* Such as are masters of a family, should endeavour to see the kingdom of grace set up in their servants; such as are godly parents, let not God alone by prayer, till you see grace in your children: what a comfort would it be to you, to be both the natural and spiritual fathers of your children? *Austin* saith, his mother *Monica* travailed with greater care and pain for his new birth, than his natural. This shows the increase of grace, when we labour to see the kingdom of grace set up in others; then the water abounds in the river, when it overflows and runs into the meadows; then grace increaseth in the soul when it hath influence upon others, and we endeavour their salvation.

Qu. 2. *Wherein appears the needfulness of this, that the kingdom of grace should be encreased?*

1. This is God's design in keeping up a standing ministry in the church to increase the kingdom of grace in men's hearts, *Eph. iv. 8.* *He gave gifts unto men;* that is, ministerial gifts: why so? *v. 12.* *For the edifying of the body of Christ.* Not only for conversion, but for augmentation: therefore the word preached is compared not only to seed, but to milk; because by this breast-milk, God designs our growth in grace.

2. We had need have the kingdom of grace increase, in respect we have a great deal of work to do, and a little grace will hardly carry us thorow. A Christian's life is laborious, so many temptations to resist, so many promises to believe, so many precepts to obey, that it will require a great deal of grace: a Christian must not only pray, but pray fervently, *James v. 16.* Not only repent, but be zealous and repent, *Rev. iii. 19.* Not only love, but be sick of love, *Cant. ii. 5.* How had he need therefore have the kingdom of grace enlarged in his soul? As his work increaseth upon him, so his grace had need increase.

3. If the kingdom of grace doth not increase, it will decay, *Rev. ii. 4.* *Thou hast left thy first love.* Grace, for want of increasing, is sometimes



times like a winter-plant, all the sap runs to the root, and it looks as if it were dead, *Rev. iii. 2. Strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die*: though grace cannot expire, it may wither; and a withering Christian loseth much of his beauty and fragrancy: what great need have we then to pray, *thy kingdom come*, that this kingdom of grace may be increased? If grace be not improved, it will soon be impaired. A Christian, for want of increasing his grace, loseth his strength; he is like a sick man, that cannot either walk or work; his prayers are sick and weak, he is as if he had no life in him, his faith can hardly fetch breath, and you can scarce feel the pulse of his love to beat.

4. To have grace increasing, is suitable to Christianity: Christians are called trees of righteousness, *Isa. lxi. 3*. The saints are not only jewels for sparkling lustre, but trees for growth; they are called the lights of the world, *Phil. ii. 15*. Light is still increasing. First there is the *crepusculum*, or day-break, and so it shines brighter to the meridian. They who are the lights of the world must increase till they come to the meridian of glory. Not to grow is suspicious; painted things grow not.

5. As the kingdom of grace increaseth, so a Christian's comforts increase. Comfort belongs to the *bene esse*, or well being of a Christian; it is like sweet meat, delicious to the taste, *Pf. xciv. 19*. The more grace, the more joy. As the more sap in the root, the more wine in the grape. Who did more increase in grace than *David*? And who more in consolation, *Pf. iv. 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart*. Grace turns to joy, as milk to cream.

Qu. (3.) *How may they be comforted, who bewail their want of growth, and weep that they cannot find the kingdom of grace increase?*

Ans. 1. To see and bewail our decay in grace, argues not only the life of grace, but growth. 'Tis a sign a man recovers and gets strength, when he feels his weakness: it is a step forward in grace, to see our imperfections. The more the spirit shines in the heart, the more evil it discovers; a Christian thinks it worse with him than it was, whereas his grace may not grow lesser, but his light greater.

2. If a Christian doth not increase in one grace, he may in another; if not in knowledge, he may in humility. If a tree doth not grow so much in the branches, it may in the root:

to grow downwards in the root, is a good growth.

3. A Christian may grow less in *affection*, when he grows more in *judgment*. As a musician when he is old, his fingers are stiff, and not so nimble at the lute as they were, but he plays with more art and judgment than before: so a Christian may not have so much affection in duty as at the first *conversion*, but he is more solid in religion, and more settled in his judgment than he was before.

4. A Christian may think he doth not increase in grace, because he doth not increase in gifts; whereas there may be a decay of natural parts, the memory, and other faculties, when there is not a decay of grace. Parts may be impaired, when grace is improved: be not discouraged, it is better to decay in parts, and be enlarged in grace, than to be enlarged in parts, and to decay in grace.

5. A Christian may increase in grace, yet not be so sensible of it. The seed may grow in the earth, when we do not perceive it to spring up: the grace may grow in time of desertion, and not be perceived. So I have done with the first thing intended in this petition, *thy kingdom come*; we pray that the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts, and that it may increase and flourish.

I should come to the second thing intended in this petition, *that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in due time be translated into it*.

When we pray, *thy kingdom come*, here is something positively intended; we pray, (1.) That the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts. (2.) That it may increase and flourish. (3.) That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that God would in his due time translate us into it.

1. What this kingdom of glory is.
2. What are the properties of it.
3. Wherein it exceeds all other kingdoms.
4. When this kingdom comes.
5. Wherein appears the certainty of it.
6. Why we should pray for its coming.

First, What this kingdom of glory is.

Ans. By this kingdom is meant, that glorious estate which the saints shall enjoy, when they shall reign with God and angels for ever. If a man stand upon the sea-shore, he cannot see all the dimensions of the sea, the length, breadth, and depth of it; yet he may see it is of a vast extension: so, though the kingdom of heaven

be of that incomparable excellency, that neither tongue of man or angels can express, yet we may conceive of it to be an exceeding glorious thing, such as eye hath not seen.

Concerning the kingdom of heaven, I shall show what, (1.) It implies. (2.) It imports.

(1.) What it implies.

*Ans.* It implies a blessed freedom from all evil.

2. What it imports.

*Ans.* It imports glorious fruition of all good.

1. What the kingdom of heaven implies.

*Ans.* It implies a freedom from all evil.

1. A freedom from the necessities of nature.

We are in this life subject to many necessities; we need food to nourish us, clothes to cover us, armour to defend us, sleep to refresh us; but in the kingdom of heaven there is no need of these things: and it is better not to need them, than to have them; as it is better not to need crutches, than to have crutches: What need will there be of food when our bodies shall be made spiritual? *1 Cor. xv. 44.* Tho' not spiritual for substance, yet for qualities. What need will there be of clothing, when our bodies shall be like Christ's glorious body? What need will there be of armour, when there is no enemy? What need will there be of sleep, when there is no night? *Rev. xxii. 5.* The saints shall be freed, in the heavenly kingdom, from those necessities of nature to which they now ly exposed.

2. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the imperfections of nature. Since the fall our knowledge hath suffered an eclipse.

(1. Our natural knowledge is imperfect, it is chequered with ignorance. There are many hard knots in nature, which we cannot easily untie: why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it? What way the light is parted? *Job xxxviii. 24.* What is the reason of all the occult qualities, sympathies, and antipathies? He who sees clearest, hath a mist before his eyes. *Socrates* said on his death-bed, there were many things he had yet to learn: Our ignorance is more than our knowledge.

(2.) Our divine knowledge is imperfect; we know but in part, saith *Paul*, *1 Cor. xiii. 9.* Though he had many revelations, and was wrapt up into the third heaven. We have but dark conceptions of the trinity, *Job xi. 7.* *Canst thou by searching find out God?* Our narrow capacities will no more contain the

trinity, than a little glass-vial will hold all the water in the sea: we cannot unriddle the mystery of the incarnation, the human nature assumed into the person of the son of God; the human nature not God, yet united with God: we see now in *an enigma*, in a glass darkly; but in the kingdom of heaven the veil shall be taken off, all imperfections of nature shall be done away. When the sunlight of glory shall begin to shine in the heavenly horizon, all dark shadows of ignorance shall fly away, our lamp of knowledge shall burn bright, she shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully.

3. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the toilsom labours of this life. God enacted a law in paradise, *in the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat bread*, *Gen. iii. 9.* There is the labour of the hand in manufacture, and the labour of the mind in study, *Ecc. i. 8.* *All things are full of labour*; but in the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from our labours.

(1.) There needs no labour, when a man hath got to the haven, he hath no more need of sailing. In heaven there needs no labour, because the saints shall have that glory which they laboured for.

2. There shall be no labour, *Rev. xiv. 13.* *They rest from their labours.* As God, when he had finished the work of creation, rested from his labours, *Gen. ii. 2.* So, when the saints have finished the work of sanctification, they rest from their labours. Where should there be rest, but in the heavenly centre? Not that this sweet rest in the kingdom of heaven excludes all motion, for spirits cannot be idle; but the saints glorified shall rest from all wearisom employment; it shall be a labour full of ease, a motion full of delight; the saints in heaven shall love God, and what labour is that? Is it any labour to love beauty? They shall praise God, and that is delightful: when the bird sings, it is not so much labour as a pleasure.

4. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from original corruption: this is *causa causati*, the root of all actual sin. There would be no actual sin, if there were no original; there would be no water in the stream, if there were none in the fountain. Original sin is incorporated into our nature; it is as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted. This makes a Christian weary of his life; he offends that



that God whom he loves. What would a Christian give to have his chains taken off, to be rid of vain thoughts? How did *Paul* (that bird-of-paradise) bemoan himself for his sins? *Rom. vii. 24.* We cannot act either our duties or our graces without sin. The soul that is most refined and clarified by grace, is not without some dregs of corruption; but in the kingdom of heaven the fountain of original sin shall be quite dried up: what a blessed time will that be, never to grieve God's spirit more! in heaven are virgin-souls; there is beauty which is not stained with lust: nothing enters there that defiles, *Rev. xxi. 27.*

5. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from all sorrows, *Rev. xxi. 4. There shall be no more sorrow.* Our life here is interlarded with trouble, *Pf. xxxi. 10.* Either losses grieve, or law-suits vex, or unkindness breaks the heart. We may as well separate moisture from air, or weight from lead, as troubles from man's life. *Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?* Aug. But, in the kingdom of heaven, sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Here the saints sit by the river weeping, but one smile from Christ's face will make them forget all their sufferings; their water then shall be turned into wine, their mourning into music.

6. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the immodesty of temptation. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison; but is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he walks about tempting, he labours to trapan us into sin; he is either laying of snares, or shooting of darts. *Stat in procinctu diabolus.* He laid a train of temptation to blow up the castle of *Job's* faith. This is as great a grief to the believer to be followed with temptations to sin, as it is for a virgin to have her chastity assaulted: but, in the kingdom of heaven, the saints shall be freed from the red dragon; he is cast out of paradise, and shall be for ever locked up in chains, *Jude 6.*

7. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from all vexing cares. The Greek word for care, comes from a primitive which signifies, to cut the heart in pieces. Care dis cruciates the mind, it wastes the spirits, it eats out the comfort of life. Care is an evil spirit that haunts us; care to prevent future dangers, and preserve present comforts. All care is full of fear, and fear is full of torment, *1 John iv. 18.* God threatens it as a judgment, *Ezek. xii.*

19. *They shall eat their bread with carefulness.* Every comfort hath its care, as every rose hath its prickle; but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall shake off this viper of care. What needs a saint glorified to take any care, who hath all things provided to his hand? There is the tree of life bearing all sorts of fruit. When the heart shall be freed from sin, the head shall be freed from care.

8. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all doubts and scruples. In this life the best saint hath his doubtings, as the brightest star hath its twinkling. If there were no doubtings, there would be no unbelief: assurance itself doth not exclude all doubting, *Pf. xxvi. 3. Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes;* but at another time, *Pf. lxxxix. 49. Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?* A Christian is like a ship at anchor, which, tho' it be safe, yet it may sometimes be tossed upon the water. Sometimes a Christian questions his interest in Christ, and his title to the promise; and these doubtings, as they eclipse a Christian's comfort, so they are a bearing false witness against the spirit. But, when the saints shall come into the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no more doubtings: then a Christian shall say, as *Peter*, now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me, *Acts xii. 11.* So, now I know, that I am passed from death to life, now I am gone beyond all rocks, I have shot the gulph, now I am in my Saviour's embraces for ever.

9. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all society with the wicked. Here we are forced sometime to be in their company, *Pf. cxx. 5. Wo is me that I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar.* Kedar was *Ismael's* son, whose children dwelt in Arabia, a profane, barbarous people. Here the wicked are still raising persecutions against the godly, and crucifying their ears with their oaths and curses: Christ's lilly is among thorns; but in the heavenly kingdom there shall be no more any pricking briar, *Mat. xiii. 41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.* As *Moses* said, *Exod. xiv. 13. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.* So will God say, stand still and see the salvation of God; these your enemies, that vex and molest you, you shall see them again no more for ever. At that day, God



God will separate the precious from the vile; then Christ will thoroughly purge his floor, he will gather the wheat into the garner, and the wicked, which are the chaff, shall be blown into hell.

10. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all signs of God's displeasure. Here God may be angry with his people: though he hath the heart of a father, he may have the look of an enemy; this is sad. As when the sun is gone the dew falls; when the light of God's face is gone, tears drop from the saints eyes. But, in the kingdom of heaven; there shall be no spiritual eclipses, there shall never appear any tokens of God's displeasure; the saints shall have a constant aspect of love from God, they shall never complain any more, as *Cant. v. 6. My beloved hath withdrawn himself.*

11. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all divisions. That, which is the saddest thing in the world, is to see divisions among them that are good. 'Tis sad, that such as have one faith, yet should not be of one heart: *Ephraim envies Judah, and Judah vexeth Ephraim*: 'tis matter of tears, to see those who are united to Christ, to be divided one from another. The soldier's spear pierced Christ's side, but the divisions of saints wound his heart. But, in the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no vilifying one another, or censuring: those, who before could hardly pray together, shall praise God together; there shall not be one jarring string in the saints music.

12. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from vanity and dissatisfaction. What *Job* saith of wisdom, *chap. xxviii. 14. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me.* The same may I say concerning satisfaction; every creature saith, *It is not in me.* Take things most pleasing, and which we promise ourselves most content from, still out the spirits and purest quintessence of them, and we shall say, as *Solomon* did, *Eccl. ii. 11. And, behold, all was vanity.* God never did, nor will put a satisfying vertue into any creature. In the sweetest music the world makes, either there is some string wanting, or air of tune. Who would have thought that *Haman*, who was so great in the king's favour, *he set his seat above all the princes of the provinces. Esth. iii. 1.* Yet for the want of the bowing of a knee he is dissatisfied? But in the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed, from these dissatisfactions. The world is like a landscape, you may see gardens

and fruit-trees, curiously drawn in the landscape, but you cannot enter into them; but you may enter into the joys of heaven, *enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* The soul shall be satisfied while it bathes in those rivers of pleasure at God's right-hand; *I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness, Pl. xvii. 15.* Thus you see what the kingdom of glory implies; namely, a blessed freedom from all evil.

13. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the torments of hell, *1 Thess. i. 10. Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

(1.) The multiplicity of these torments. In this life, the body is usually exercised but with one pain, the stone or head-ach; but in hell there is a diversity of torments, there is darkness to affright, fire to burn, a lake of sulphur to choke, chains to bind, the worm to gnaw.

(2.) The torments of hell will seize upon every part of the body and soul; the eye shall be tortured with the sight of devils; the tongue that hath sworn so many oaths, shall be tortured, *Luke xvi. 24. send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.* The memory shall be tormented to remember what mercies have been abused, what seasons of grace neglected; the conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations.

(3.) In the pains of hell there is no mitigation, no mixture of mercy. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy, *Hab. iii. 2.* But in hell, there is no alleviation, or lessening of the pains: as in the sacrifice of jealousy, *Numb. v. 15.* God would have no oil or frankincense put to it; so in hell there is no oil of mercy to lessen the sufferings of the damned, no incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

(4.) In the pains of hell there is no intermission. The poets feign of *Endymion*, that he got leave of *Jupiter* always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for one hours sleep? *Rev. xiv. 11. They rest not day nor night.* They are perpetually upon the rack.

(5.) In the pains of hell there is no expiration; they must always lie scorching in flames of wrath, *Rev. xiv. 11. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever*; but, in the heavenly kingdom, the elect shall be freed from all infernal torments; *Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.* A prison is not made for the king's children. Christ drank that bitter cup of God's wrath, that the saints might never drink it.

Secondly,



*Secondly*, In the kingdom of heaven there is a glorious fruition of all good. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could not fully describe this: I may say, as *Judges xviii. 9, 10.* heaven is called, *the excellent glory*, 2 Pet. i. 17. I may as well span the firmament, or drain the ocean, as set forth the glory of this kingdom. *Caelum non habet hyperbolem*; the kingdom of heaven is above all hyperbole. Were the sun ten thousand times brighter than it is, it could not parallel the lustre of this kingdom; *Apelles's* pencil would blot, angels tongues would lessen it: I can but give you the *skiagraphia*, or dark shadow of it; expect not to see it in all its orient colours, till you are mounted above the stars. But let us not stand afar off, as *Moses*, to behold this *Canaan*, but enter into it, and taste the honey. Concerning the fruitions and privileges of this heavenly kingdom.

1. We shall have an immediate communion with God himself, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness: this divines call, *the beatifical vision*. The psalmist did triumph in that enjoyment he had of God in this life, *Pf. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee?* If God, enjoyed by faith, doth give so much comfort to the soul; how much more, when he is enjoyed by immediate vision! Here we see God but darkly through the glass of ordinances, but, in the kingdom of heaven we shall see him *face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. We shall have an intellectual sight of God, *i. e.* we shall see him with the eyes of our mind; we shall know God as much as the angels in heaven do, *Matth. xviii. 10.* and 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *We shall know as we are known.* We shall have a full knowledge of God, tho' not know him fully; as a vessel in the sea, is full of the sea, tho' it holds not all the sea. To see and enjoy God, will be most delicious; in God are beams of majesty, and bowels of mercy. God hath all excellencies concentered in him, *bonum in quo omnia bona.* If one flower should have the sweetness of all flowers, how sweet would that flower be? All the beauty and sweetness which lies scattered in the creature, is infinitely to be found in God; therefore, to see and enjoy him, will ravish the soul with delight. We shall so see God as to love him, and be made sensible of his love: and, when we shall have this sweet communion with God, then God shall be *all in all*, 1 Cor. xv. 28. light to the eye, manna to the taste, music to the ear.

2. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, with

these eyes, see the glorified body of Jesus Christ. This our Saviour makes a great part of the glory of heaven, to view the glory of his human nature, *John xvii. 24. That they may behold my glory.* When Christ was transfigured upon earth, 'tis said, *That his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*, *Matth. xvii. 2.* If the glory of his transfiguration was so great, what will the glory of his exaltation be? Much of the glory of God shines in Christ, by virtue of the hypostatical union, *Col. ii. 9. In whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Through Christ's humanity, as through a bright mirror, we may see some beams of the Divine Majesty shine forth. Put a back of steel to a glass, and you may see a face in it: Christ's human nature is as a back of steel put to the divine nature; thro' this we may see God, and then our capacities shall be enlarged to a wonderful degree, to receive this glorious object; and we shall not only see God's glory, but some of his glory shall be put upon us. *Non tantum aderit gloria, sed inerit*, *Bern.* A beggar may behold the glory of a king, and not be the happier; but Christ's glory shall be ours, *We shall be like him*, 1 John iii. 2. We shall shine by his beams.

3. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, enjoy the society of an innumerable company of angels, *Heb. xii. 22.*

*Qu. But, is there not enough in God to fill the soul with delight? Can the sight of angels add to the soul's happiness? What need is there of the light of torches, when the sun shines?*

*Ans.* Besides the divine essence, the sight of angels is desireable; much of God's curious workmanship shines in the angels; the angels are beautiful, glorious creatures: and as the several strings in a lute make the harmony sweeter, and the several stars make the firmament brighter, so the society with angels will make the delight of heaven the greater; and we shall not only see the angels with the glorified eye of our understanding, but converse with them.

4. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have sweet society with glorified saints, then the communion of saints will be illustrious. O what a blessed time will it be when those who have prayed, wept, suffered together, shall rejoice together! We shall see the saints in their white linen of purity, and see them as so many crowned kings; in beholding the saints glorified,

fiel, we shall behold an heaven full of suns. Some move the question, whether we shall know one another in heaven? Surely our knowledge shall not be diminished, but increased. It is the judgment of *Luther* and *Anselm*, and many other divines, that we shall know one another; yea, the saints of all ages, whose faces we never saw: and, when we shall see the saints in glory without their spots, viz. their infirmities, pride and passion, this will be a glorious sight. We see how *Peter* was transported, when he saw but two prophets in the transfiguration, *Matth. xvii. 3.* but, what a blessed sight will it be, when we shall see such a glorious company of prophets, and martyrs, and holy men of God! How sweet will the music be, when they shall all sing together in concert in the heavenly choir! And tho', in this great assembly of saints and angels, *one star may differ from another in glory*, yet no such weed as envy shall ever grow in the paradise of God; then there shall be perfect love, which, as it casts out fear, so also envy; tho' one vessel of glory may hold more than another, yet every vessel shall be full.

5. In the kingdom of heaven there shall be incomprehensible joy. *Aristotle* saith, *joy proceeds from union.* When the saints union with Christ is perfected in heaven, then their joy shall be full; all the birds of the heavenly paradise sing for joy. What joy when the saints shall see the great gulf shut, and know that they are passed from death to life! What joy, when they are as holy as they would be, and as God would have them to be! What joy to hear the music of angels, to see the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over the soul, to be drinking that water of life which is quintessential, and is sweeter than all *nectar* and *ambrosia*! What joy, when the saints shall see Christ clothed in their flesh, sitting in glory above the angels! Then they shall *enter into the joy of their Lord*, *Matth. xxv. 21.* Here joy enters into the saints, in heaven *they enter into joy.* O thou saint of God, who now hangest thy harp upon the willows, and manglest thy drink with weeping, in the kingdom of heaven thy *water shall be turned into wine*; you shall have so much felicity, that your souls cannot wish for more. The sea is not so full of water, as the heart of a glorified saint is of joy: there can be no more sorrow in heaven, than there is joy in hell.

6. In heaven there is honour and dignity put upon the saints: a kingdom imports ho-

nour. All that come into heaven are kings; they have, 1. A crown, *Rev. ii. 10. Dabo tibi, the crown of life; corona est insigne regie potestatis.* The crown is not lined with thorns, but hung with jewels; it is a never-fading crown, 1 *Pet. v. 4.* 2. The saints in heaven have their robes; they exchange their sackcloth for white robes, *Rev. vii. 9. I beheld a great multitude which no man could number, clothed in white robes.* Robes signify their glory, white their sanctity. And, 3. They sit with Christ upon the throne, *Rev. iii. 21.* We read, 1 *Kings vi. 33.* the doors of the holy of holies were made of palm-trees, and open flowers covered with gold; an emblem of that victory and that garland of glory which the saints shall wear in the kingdom of heaven. When all the titles and ensigns of worldly honour shall ly in the dust, the mace, the silver star, the garter, then shall the saints honour remain.

7. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have a blessed rest. Rest is the end of motion; heaven is *centrum quietativum animæ*, the blessed centre where the soul doth acquiesce and rest. In this life, we are subject to unquiet motions and fluctuations, 2 *Cor. vii. 5. We are troubled on every side*; like a ship on the sea, having the waves beating on both sides: but in the kingdom of heaven there is rest, *Heb. iv. 9.* How welcome is rest to a weary traveller? When death cuts asunder the string of the body, the soul, as a dove, flies away, and is at rest. This rest is when the saints shall ly on Christ's bosom, that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume.

8. The saints shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have their bodies richly bespangled with glory; they shall be full of clarity and brightness. As *Moses's* face shined, that *Israel* were not able to behold the glory, *Exod. xxxiv. 30.* The bodies of the saints shall shine seven times brighter than the sun, saith *Chrysostom*; they shall have such a resplendency of beauty on them, that the angels shall fall in love with them; and no wonder, *For they shall be made like Christ's glorious body*, *Phi. iii. 21.* The bodies of saints glorified need no jewels, when they shall shine like Christ's body.

9. In the heavenly kingdom is eternity; 'tis an eternal fruition, they shall never be put out of the throne, *Rev. xxii. 5. They shall reign for ever and ever.* It is called, *the everlasting kingdom*, 2 *Pet. i. 11.* and *an eternal weight of glory*, 2 *Cor. iv. 17.* The flowers of paradise,



of which the saint's garland is made, never wither. If there could be a cessation of heaven's glory, or the saints had but the least fear or suspicion of losing their felicity, it would infinitely abate and cool their joy; but their kingdom is for ever, the rivers of paradise cannot be dried up, *Pf. xvi. 11. At thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore.* The kingdom of heaven was typified by the temple, which was built with stone, covered with cedar, overlaid with gold, to show the fixed permanent state of glory, that kingdom abides for ever. Well may we pray, *Thy kingdom come.*

Having spoken of the kingdom of grace, and how we may know that kingdom is set up in our hearts, I am next speaking of the kingdom of glory, or heaven.

1. What is meant by the kingdom of heaven.
2. What are the properties of this kingdom.
3. Wherein this heavenly kingdom excels all the kingdoms upon earth.
4. When this kingdom shall be bestowed.
5. Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of it.
6. Why we should pray for the coming of this kingdom.

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the kingdom of heaven?*

Ans. 1. It imports a blessed freedom from all evil. 2. It implies a glorious fruition of all good. (1.) Immediate communion with God, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness. (2.) A visible beholding the glorified body of Jesus Christ. (3.) A glorious vision of saints and angels. (4.) Dignity and honour, the crown, and white robes. (5.) A blessed rest.

Qu. 2. *What are the properties or qualifications of the kingdom of heaven?*

Ans. 1. The glory of this kingdom is solid and substantial; the Hebrew word for glory signifies a weight, to show how solid and weighty the glory of the celestial kingdom is: the glory of the worldly kingdom is airy and imaginary, like a blazing comet, or fancy, *Acts xxv. 23. Agrippa and Bernice come with a great pomp, with a great fancy, Job xxvi. 7.* The earth hangs like a ball in the air, without any thing to uphold it. The glory of the heavenly kingdom is substantial, it hath twelve foundations, *Rev. xxi. 14.* That which God and angels count glory, is true glory.

2. The glory of this kingdom is satisfying, *Pf. xxxvi. 9. With thee is the fountain of life.*

How can they choose but be full, who are at the fountain-head? *Pf. xvii. 15. When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness, i. e. when I awake in the morning of the resurrection, having some of the beams of thy glory shining in me, I shall be satisfied. Job xxviii. 14.* The creature saith concerning satisfaction, *It is not in me.* If we go for happiness to the creature, we go to the wrong box; only heaven's glory is commensurate to the vast desires of an immortal soul. A christian, bathing himself in these rivers of pleasure, cries out in a divine extasy, I have enough. The soul is never satisfied till it hath God for its portion, and heaven for its haven. Dissatisfaction ariseth from some defect, but God is an infinite good, and there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

3. The glory of heaven's kingdom is pure and unmixed; the streams of paradise are not muddied, *omnia clara, omnia jucunda*: there, that gold hath no alloy: no bitter ingredient in that glory, but pure as the honey drops from the comb; there is a rose grows without prickles, the rose of *Sharon*; there, is ease without pain, honour without disgrace, life without death.

4. The glory of this kingdom is constantly exhilarating and refreshing; there is fulness, but no surfeit. Worldly comforts, tho' sweet, yet in time grow stale: a down-bed pleaseth a-while, but within a-while we are weary, and would rise. Too much pleasure is a pain: but the glory of heaven doth never surfeit or nauseate; the reason is, because, as there are all rarities imaginable, so every moment fresh delights spring from God into the glorified soul.

5. The glory of this kingdom is distributed to every individual saint: in an earthly kingdom, the crown goes but to one, a crown will fit but one head; but in that kingdom above, the crown goes to all, *Rev. i. 6.* All elect are kings. The land is settled chiefly upon the heir, and the rest are ill provided for: but, in the kingdom of heaven, all the saints are heirs, *Rom. viii. 17. Heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ.* God hath land enough to give to all his heirs.

6. Lucid and transparent. This kingdom of heaven is adorned and bespangled with light, *1 Tim. vi. 16.* Light is the glory of the creation, *Eccl. xi. 7. The light is sweet.* Hell is a dark dungeon, *Matth. xxii. 13.* Fire, but no light.

light. The kingdom of heaven is a *diaphanum*, all embroidered with light, clear as crystal. How can there want light, where Christ the sun of righteousness displays his golden beams? *Rev. xxi. 23. The glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

7. The glory of this kingdom is adequate and proportionable to the desire of the soul. In creature-fruits, that which doth commend them, and set them off to us, is suitableness: the content of marriage doth not ly either in beauty or portion, but the suitableness of disposition. The excellency of a feast is, when the meat is suited to the palate: this is one ingredient in the glory of heaven, it exactly suits the desires of the glorified saints; we shall not say in heaven, *here is a dish I do not love!* There shall be music suits the ear, the anthems of angels; and food that suits with the glorified palate, the hidden manna of God's love.

8. The glory of this kingdom will be seasonable. The seasonableness of a mercy adds to the beauty and sweetness; it is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. After an hard winter in this cold climate, will it not be seasonable to have the spring-flowers of glory appear, and the singing of the birds of paradise come? when we have been wearied, and even tired out in battle with sin and *Satan*, will not a crown be seasonable?

3 Qu. *Wherein the kingdom of heaven infinitely excels all the kingdoms of the earth?*

*Ans.* 1. It excels in the architect: other kingdoms have men to raise their structures, but God himself laid the first stone in this kingdom, *Heb. xi. 10.* This kingdom is of the greatest antiquity; God was the first king and founder of it; no angel was worthy to lay a stone in this building.

2. This heavenly kingdom excels in altitude; 'tis higher situated than any kingdom; the higher any thing is, the more excellent: the fire, being the most sublime element, is most noble. The kingdom of heaven is seated above all the visible orbs: there is, 1. The airy heaven, which is the space from the earth to the sphere of the moon. 2. The starry heaven, the place where are the planets of an higher elevation, *Saturn, Jupiter, Mars.* 3. The *cælum empyreum*, the empyrean heaven, which *Paul* calls the *third heaven*: where Christ is, there is the kingdom of glory situated. This kingdom is so high, that no scaling ladders of enemies can reach it; so high, that the old ser-

pent cannot shoot up his fiery darts to it. If wicked men could build their nests among the stars, yet the least believer would shortly be above them.

3. The kingdom of heaven excels all other in splendor and riches; it is described by precious stones, *Rev. xxi. 19.* What are all the rarities of the earth to this kingdom, coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices? what are the wonders of the world to it, the *Egyptian* pyramids, the temple of *Diana*, the pillar of the sun offered to *Jupiter*? what a rich kingdom is that where God will lay out all his cost? Those who are poor in the world, yet, as soon as they come into this kingdom, grow rich, as rich as the angels: other kingdoms are enriched with gold, this is enriched with the Deity.

4. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in holiness. Kingdoms on earth are for the most part unholy: there is a common shore of luxury and uncleanness running in them: kingdoms are stages for sin to be acted on, *Isa. xxviii. 8. All tables are full of vomit.* But the kingdom of heaven is so holy, that it will not mix with any corruption, *Rev. xxi. 27. There shall enter into it nothing that defileth.* 'Tis so pure a soil, that no serpent of sin will breed there: there is beauty which is not stained with lust, and honour which is not swelled with pride. Holiness is the brightest jewel of the crown of heaven.

5. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in its pacific nature; 'tis *regnum pacis*, a kingdom of peace. Peace is the glory of a kingdom; *pax una triumphis innumeris melior.* A king's crown is more adorned with the white lily of peace, than when it is beset with the red roses of a bloody war. But where shall we find an uninterrupted peace upon earth? Either home-bred divisions, or foreign invasions, *2 Chron. xv. 5. There was no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in.* But the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of peace; there are no enemies to conflict with; all Christ's enemies shall be *under his feet*, *Ps. cx. 1.* The gates of that kingdom always stand open, *Rev. xxi. 25. The gates shall not be shut at all;* to show, that there is no fear of an assault of an enemy; the saints, when they die, are said to enter into peace, *Isa. lvii. 2.* There's no beating of drums, or roaring of cannons, but the voice of harpers harping, in token of

D d d 2 peace,



peace, *Rev. xiv. 2.* In heaven, *righteousness and peace kiss each other.*

6. The kingdom of heaven excels in magnitude; it is of vast dimensions. Though the gate of the kingdom be strait, we must pass into it through the strait gate of mortification; yet, when once we are in, it is very large; though there be an innumerable company of saints and angels, yet there is room enough for them. The kingdom of heaven may be called by the name of that well, *Gen. xxvi. 22.* Jacob called the name of it Rehoboth; for he said, now the Lord hath made room for us. Thou, who art now confined to a small cottage, when thou comest into the celestial kingdom, thou shalt not be straitened for room. As every star hath a large orb to move in, so it shall be with the saints, when they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven.

7. The kingdom of heaven excels for unity; all the inhabitants agree together in love: love will be the perfume and music of heaven; as love to God will be intense, so to the saints. Perfect love, as it casts out fear, so it casts out envy and discord. Those Christians who could not live quietly together on earth (which was the blemish of their profession) yet, in the kingdom of heaven, the fire of strife shall cease; there shall be no vilifying, or censuring one another, or raking into one another's sores, but all shall be tied together with the heart-strings of love; there Luther and Zuinglius are agreed: Satan cannot put in his cloven foot there to make divisions; there shall be perfect harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the saint's music. It were worth dying to be in that kingdom.

8. This kingdom exceeds all earthly in joy and pleasure; therefore it is called paradise, *2 Cor. xii. 4.* For delight: there are all things to cause pleasure; there is the water of life pure as crystal; there is the honey-comb of God's love dropping; 'tis called, *entering into the joy of our Lord, Matth. xxv. 23.* There are two things cause joy.

(1.) Separation from sin: sin creates sorrow; but when this viper of sin shall be shaken off, then joy follows. There can be no more sorrow in heaven, than there is joy in hell.

(2.) Perfect union with Christ: joy, as Aristotle saith, flows from union with the object. When our union with Christ shall be perfect, then our joy shall be full: if the joy of faith be so great, *1 Pet. i. 8.* Then what will the

joy of sight be? Joseph gave his brethren provision for the way, but the full sacks of corn were kept till they came at their father's house: God gives the saints a taste of joy here, but the full sacks are kept till they come to heaven. Not only the organical parts, the outward senses, the eye, ear, taste shall be filled with joy; but the heart of a glorified saint shall be filled with joy. The understanding, will and affections are such a triangle, as none can fill but the trinity: there must needs be infinite joy, where nothing is seen but beauty; nothing is tasted but love.

9. This kingdom of heaven excels all earthly in self-perfection: other kingdoms are defective, they have not all provision within themselves, but are fain to traffic abroad to supply their wants at home: king Solomon did send to Ophir for gold, *2 Chron. viii. 18.* But there is no defect in the kingdom of heaven; it hath all commodities of its own growth, *Rev. xxi. 7.* There is the pearl of price, the morning-star, the mountains of spices, the bed of love; there are those sacred rarities, wherewith God and angels are delighted.

10. This kingdom of heaven excels all other in honour and nobility. It doth not only equal them in the ensigns of royalty, the throne and white robes; but it doth far transcend them: other kings are of the blood-royal; but they in this heavenly kingdom are born of God: other kings converse with nobles; the saints glorified are fellow-communers with angels; they have a more noble crown, 'tis made of the flowers of paradise, and is a crown that fadeth not away, *1 Pet. v. 4.* They sit on a better throne: king Solomon, *1 Kings x. 18.* sat on a throne of ivory overlaid with gold; but the saints are in heaven higher advanced, they sit with Christ upon his throne, *Rev. iii. 21.* They shall judge the princes and great ones of the earth, *1 Cor. xvi. 2.* This honour have all the saints glorified.

11. This kingdom of heaven excels all others in healthfulness. Death is a worm that is ever feeding at the root of our gourd; kingdoms are oft hospitals of sick persons; but the kingdom of heaven is a most healthful climate: physicians there are out of date; no distemper there, no passing bell, or bill of mortality, *Luke xx. 36.* Neither can they die any more. In the heavenly climate are no ill vapours to breed diseases, but a sweet aromatical smell coming

coming from Christ; all his garments smell of myrrhe, aloes and cassia.

12. This kingdom of heaven excels in duration, it abides for ever. Suppose earthly kingdoms to be more glorious than they are, their foundation of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire; yet they are corruptible and fading, *Hof. i. 4. I will cause the kingdom to cease. Troy and Athens now ly buried in their ruins; jam seges est ubi Troja fuit.* Mortality is the disgrace of all earthly kingdoms; but the kingdom of heaven hath eternity written upon it, it is an everlasting kingdom, *2 Pet. i. 11. 'Tis founded upon a strong basis, God's omnipotency; this kingdom the saints shall never be turned out of, or be deposed from their throne, as some kings have been, viz. Henry vi. &c. But shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xxii. 5.*

How should all this affect our hearts? What should we mind but this kingdom of heaven, which doth more outshine all the kingdoms of the earth, than the sun outshines the light of a taper?

4. Qu. *When this kingdom shall be bestowed?*

Ans. This glory in the kingdom of heaven shall be begun at death, but not perfected till the resurrection.

1. The saints shall enter upon the kingdom of glory immediately after death; before their bodies are buried, their souls shall be crowned, *Phil. i. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ:* from this connection, *departing, and being with Christ*, we see clearly that there is a *subitus transitus*, speedy passage from death to glory: no sooner is the soul of a believer divorced from the body, but it presently goes to Christ, *2 Cor. v. 8. Absent from the body, present with the Lord.* It were better for believers to stay here, if immediately after death they were not with Christ in glory; for here the saints are daily increasing their grace; here they may have many *prælibamina*, sweet tastes of God's love: so that it were better to stay here, if their soul should sleep in their body, and they should not have a speedy sight of God in glory: but this is the consolation of believers, they shall not stay long from their kingdom; it is but winking and they shall see God. It will be a blessed change to a believer, from a desert to a paradise, from a bloody battle to a victorious crown: and a sudden change; no sooner did *Lazarus* die, but he had a convoy of angels to conduct his soul to the kingdom

of glory. You who now are full of bodily diseases, scarce a day well, *Pf. xxxi. 10. My life is spent with grief;* be of good comfort, you may be happy before you are aware; before another week or month be over, you may be in the kingdom of glory, and then all tears shall be wiped away.

2. The glory in the kingdom of heaven, will be fully perfected at the resurrection, and general day of judgment; then the bodies and souls of believers will be reunited: what joy will there be at the reunion and meeting together of the soul and body of a saint! O what a welcome will the soul give to the body! O my dear body, thou didst often join with me in prayer, and now thou shalt join with me in praise; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me; thou wert sown a vile body, but now thou art made like Christ's glorious body; we were once for a time divorced, but now we are married, and crowned together in a kingdom, and shall mutually congratulate each other's felicity.

5. Qu. *Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of this kingdom of glory?*

Ans. That this blessed kingdom shall be bestowed on the saints, is beyond all dispute.

1. God hath promised it, *Luke xii. 32. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom. Luke xxii. 29. I appoint unto you a kingdom [Gr. diatithemai] I bequeath it as my last-will and testament.* Hath God promised a kingdom, and will he not make it good? God's promise is better than any bond, *Tit. i. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, hath promised.* The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power; and cannot our faith hang upon the word of his promise?

2. There is a price laid down for this kingdom. Heaven is not only a kingdom which God hath promised, but which Christ hath purchased: it is called a purchased possession, *Eph. i. 14. Though this kingdom is given us freely, yet Christ bought it with the price of his blood; Christ's blood is an heaven-procuring blood, Heb. x. 19. Having boldness to enter into the holiest (i.e. into heaven) by the blood of Jesus. Crux Christi clavis paradisi,* Christ's blood is the key that opens the gates of heaven. Should not the saints have this kingdom, then Christ should lose his purchase: Christ on the cross was in hard travail, *Isa. xlii. 11. He travailed to bring forth salvation to the elect; should not they possess the kingdom when they die, Christ should lose*



lose his travail, all his pangs and agonies of soul upon the cross should be in vain.

3. Christ prays that the saints may have this kingdom settled upon them; *John xvii. 24. Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, i. e. In heaven.* This is Christ's prayer, that the saints might be with him in his kingdom. And be belpangled with some of the beams of his glory: now, if they should not go into this heavenly kingdom, then Christ's prayer would be frustrated; but that cannot be, for he is God's favourite, *John xi. 42. I know thou hearest me always*; and besides, what Christ prays for, he hath power to give: observe the manner of Christ's prayer, *Father, I will; father,* there he prays as man; *I will,* there he gives as God.

4. The saints must have this blessed kingdom by virtue of Christ's ascension, *John xx. 17. I ascend to my father and your father, to my God and to your God.* Where lies, the comfort of this? Here it lies, Jesus Christ ascended to take possession of heaven for all believers. As an husband takes up his abode in another country in the behalf of his wife; so Christ went to take possession of heaven, in the behalf of all believers, *John xiv. 2. I go to prepare a place for you.* My ascension is to make all things ready against your coming: I go to prepare the heavenly mansions for you. The flesh that Christ hath taken into heaven, is a sure pledge that all our flesh and bodies shall be where he is ere long. Christ did not ascend to heaven, as a private person, but as a public person, for the good of all believers; his ascension was a certain fore-runner of the saints ascending into heaven.

5. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, in regard of the previous works of the spirit in their hearts. They have the beginning of the kingdom of heaven in them here; grace is heaven begun in the soul: besides, God gives them *primit as spiritus*, the first-fruits of the spirit, *Rom. viii. 23.* These first-fruits are the comforts of the spirit. The first-fruits under the law were a certain sign to the Jews of the full crop or vintage which they should after receive: the first-fruits of the spirit, consisting of joy and peace, do assure the saints of the full vintage of glory they shall be ever reaping in the kingdom of God; and the saints in this life are said to have the earnest of the spirit in their hearts, *2 Cor. v. 5.* As an earnest

is part of payment, and an assurance of payment in full to be made in due time; so God's spirit in the hearts of believers, giving them his comforts, bestows on them an earnest taste of glory, which doth further assure them of that full reward, which they shall have in the kingdom of heaven, *1 Pet. i. 8. Believing, ye rejoyce, there is the earnest of heaven, v. 9. Receiving the end of your faith, salvation, there is the full payment.*

6. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, by virtue of their coalition and union with Jesus Christ. They are members of Christ, therefore the must be where their head is. Indeed the *Arminians* hold, that a justified person may fall from grace, and so his union with Christ may be dissolved, and the kingdom lost; but I will demand of them, can Christ lose a member of his body? Then he is not perfect; and if Christ may lose one member of his body, why not as well all, by the same reason? And so he shall be an head without a body: but be assured a believer's union with Christ cannot be broken, and so long he cannot be hindered of the kingdom, *John xvii. 12.* What was said of Christ's natural body is as true of his mystical, *John x. 30. A bone of him shall not be broken.* Look how every bone and limb of Christ's natural body was raised up out of the grave, and carried into heaven: so shall every member of his mystical body be carried up into glory.

7. We read of some who have been translated into this kindom. Paul had a sight of it, for he was caught up into the third heaven; *2 Cor. xii.* And the converted thief on the cross was translated into glory, *Luke xxiii. 43. This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* By all that hath been said, it is most evident, that believers have a glorious kingdom laid up for them in reversion, and that they shall go to this kingdom when they die: there are none that doubt of the certainty of the heavenly kingdom, but such as doubt of the verity of scripture.

6. Qu. Why we should so earnestly pray for this heavenly kingdom, thy kingdom come?

Ans. 1. Because it is a kingdom worth the praying for; it exceeds the glory of all the earthly kingdoms, it hath gates of pearl, *Rev. xxi. 21.* We have heard of a cabinet of pearl, but when did we hear of gates of pearl? In this kingdom is the bed of love, the mountains of spices; there are the cherubims, not to keep us out, but to welcome us into the kingdom. Heaven is a kingdom worth the praying for; there's nothing wanting



nothing wanting in that kingdom, which may compleat the *saints happiness*; for, wherein doth *happiness* consist? Is it in *knowledge*? We shall know as we are known: it is dainty fare we shall be at the *marriage supper of the lamb*. Is it in rich apparel? We shall be clothed in *long white robes*: is it in delicious music? We shall hear the choir of angels singing: is it in dominion? We shall reign as kings, and judge angels: Is it pleasure? We shall enter into the joy of our Lord. Sure then this kingdom is worth praying for, *Thy kingdom come*. Would God give us a vision of heaven a while, as he did *Stephen* who saw heaven opened, *Acts vii. 56*. We should fall into a trance; and being a little recovered out of it, how importunately would we put up this petition, *Thy kingdom come*?

2. We must pray for this kingdom of glory, because God will not bestow this kingdom on any without prayer, *Rom. ii. 7. They who seek for glory and immortality*, and how do we seek but by prayer? God hath promised a kingdom, and we must by prayer put the bond in suit: God is not so lavish as to throw away a kingdom on them who do not ask it. And certainly, if Christ himself, who had merited glory, did yet pray for it, *John xvii. 5. Now, O father, glorify me with thy own self*: how much more ought we to pray for the excellent glory, who have this kingdom granted as a charter of God's mere grace and favour.

3. We must pray that the kingdom of glory may come, that by going into it, we may make an end of sinning. I think sometimes, what a blessed time it will be, never to have a sinful thought more! though we must not pray, *Thy kingdom come*, out of discontent, because we would be rid of the troubles and crosses of this life. This was *Jonah's* fault; he would die in a pet, because God took away his gourd; *Lord* (saith he) *take away my life too*, *Jonah iv. 8*. But we must pray, *Thy kingdom come*, out of an holy design that the fetters of corruption may be pulled off, and we may be as the angels, those virgin-spirits, who never sin. This made the church pray, *Rev. xxii. 20. Veni Domine Jesu*.

4. Because that all Christ's enemies shall be put under his feet: the devil shall have no more power to tempt, nor wicked men to persecute; the antichristian hierarchy shall be pulled down, and *Zion's* glory shall shine as a lamp, and the *Turkish* strength shall be broken.

5. We must pray earnestly that the kingdom of glory may come, that we may see God face

to face, and have an uninterrupted and eternal communion with him in the empyrean heaven. *Moses* desired but a glimpse of God's glory, *Exod. xxxiii. 18*. How then should we pray to see him in all his embroidered robes of glory, when he shall shine ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian splendour! here, in this life, we do rather desire God, than enjoy him; how earnestly therefore should we pray, *thy kingdom of glory come*! the beholding and enjoying God will be the diamond in the ring, the very quintessence of glory. And must we pray, *thy kingdom come*? How then are they ever like to come to heaven, who never pray for it? Though God gives some profane persons *daily bread*, who never pray for it; yet he will not give them a kingdom, who never pray for it. God may feed them, but he will never crown them.

#### Use I. Of information.

1. Branch. From all this you see then, that there is nothing within the whole sphere of religion imposed upon unreasonable terms. When God bids us serve him, it is no unreasonable request, he will out of free grace in-throne us in a kingdom. When we hear of repentance, sleeping our souls in brinish tears for sin; or of mortification, beheading our king-sin, we are ready to grumble, and think this is hard and unreasonable: but, do we serve God for nought? Is it not infinite bounty to reward us with a kingdom? This kingdom is as far above our thoughts, as it is beyond our deserts. No man can say, without wrong to God, that he is an hard master; though he sets us about hard work, yet he is no hard master: God gives double pay; he gives great vails in his service, sweet joy and peace; and a great reward after, *an eternal weight of glory*. God gives the spring-flowers, and a crop; he settles upon us such a kingdom as exceeds our faith. *Præmium quod fide non attingitur*, *Aug. Such as mortal eye hath not seen, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive*, *1 Cor. ii. 9*. Alas, what an infinite difference is there between duty enjoyed, and the kingdom prepared! what is the shedding of a tear to a crown? So that God's commands are not grievous, *1 John v. 3*. Our service cannot be so hard, as a kingdom is sweet.

2. Branch. See hence the royal bounty of God to his children, that he hath prepared a kingdom for them, a kingdom bespangled with glory: it is infinitely above the world



we can draw of it in our thoughts. The painter going to draw the picture of *Helena*, as not being able to draw her beauty to the life, drew her face covered with a veil; so. When we speak of the kingdom of heaven, we must draw a veil, we cannot set it forth in all its orient beauty and magnificence; gold and pearl doth but faintly shadow it out, *Rev. xxi.* The glory of this kingdom is better felt than expressed.

1. They who inherit this kingdom are *amicti stolis albis, clothed with white robes*, *Rev. vii. 9.* White robes denote three things: (1.) Their dignity; the *Persians* were arrayed in white, in token of honour. (2.) Their purity; the magistrates among the *Romans* were clothed in white, *ergo called candidati*, to show their integrity: thus the queen the lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the *righteousness of the saints*, *Rev. xix. 8.* (3.) Their joy: white is an emblem of joy, *Eccl. ix. 7. Eat thy bread with joy, let thy garments be always white.*

2. The dwellers in this kingdom have *palms in their hands*, *Rev. vii. 9.* In token of victory. They are conquerors over the world; and, being victors, they now have palm-branches.

3. They sit upon the throne with Christ, *Rev. iii. 21.* When *Cæsar* returned from conquering his enemies, there was set for him a chair of state in the senate, and a throne in the theatre. Thus the saints in glory, after their heroic victories, shall sit upon a throne with Christ. Here is royal bounty in God, to bestow such an illustrious kingdom upon the saints. 'Tis a mercy to be pardoned, but what is it to be crowned? 'Tis a mercy to be delivered from wrath to come, but what is it to be invested into a kingdom? Behold, what manner of love is this! Earthly princes may bestow great gifts and donatives upon their subjects, but they keep the kingdom to themselves. Tho' king *Pharaoh* advanced *Joseph* to honour, and took the ring off his finger and gave him, yet he would keep the kingdom to himself, *Gen. xli. 40.* But God inthrones the saints in a kingdom; God thinks nothing too good for his children; we are ready to think much of a tear, a prayer, or to sacrifice a sin for him; but he doth not think much to bestow a kingdom upon us.

3. *Branch.* See hence, that religion is no ignominious, disgraceful thing. Satan labours to cast all the odium and reproach upon it that he

can; that it is a devout frenzy, folly in-grain, *Acts xxviii. 22. As for this sect, we know that it is every where spoken against.* But wise men measure things by the end; what is the end of a religious life? It ends in a kingdom. Would a prince regard the slights of a few fanatics, when he is going to be crowned? You who are beginners, bind their reproaches as a crown about your head, despise their censures as much as their praise; a kingdom is a-coming.

4. *Branch.* See what contrary ways the godly and wicked go at death; the godly go to a kingdom, the wicked to a prison: the devil is the jaylor, and they are bound with the chains of darkness, *Jude 6.* But what are these chains? Not iron-chains, but worse; the chain of God's decree, decreeing them to torment; and the chain of God's power, whereby he binds them fast under wrath: this is the deplorable condition of impenitent sinners, they do not go to a kingdom when they die, but to a prison. O think what horror and despair will possess the wicked, when they see themselves ingulphed in misery, and their condition hopeless, helpless, endless; they are in a fiery prison, and no possibility of getting out. A servant under the law, who had an hard master, yet every seventh year was a year of release when he might go free; but in hell there is no year of release when the damned shall go free; the fire, the worm, the prison, are eternal. If the whole world, from earth to heaven, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain of sand, how many millions of ages would pass before that vast heap of sand would be quite spent: yet, if after all this time the sinner might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word *ever* breaks the heart with despair.

5. *Branch.* See then that which may make us in love with holy duties; every duty spiritually performed brings us a step nearer to the kingdom: *finis dat amabilitatem mediis.* He whose heart is set on riches, counts trading pleasant, because it brings in riches: if our hearts are set upon heaven, we shall love duty, because it brings us by degrees to the kingdom; we are going to heaven in the way of duty. Holy duties increase grace; and as grace ripens, so glory hastens: the duties of religion are irksome to flesh and blood, but we should look upon them as spiritual chariots to carry us apace to the heavenly

heavenly kingdom. The protestants in France called their church *paradise*; and well they might, because the ordinances did lead them to the paradise of God. As every flower hath its sweetness, so would every duty, if we would look upon it as giving us a lift nearer heaven.

*6th. Branch.* It shows us what little cause the children of God have, to envy the prosperity of the wicked. *Quis ærario quis pleniloculis indiget*, Sen. The wicked have the waters of a full cup wrung out to them, Ps. lxxiii. 10. As if they had a monopoly of happiness, they have all they can desire; nay, they have more than their heart can wish, Ps. lxxiii. 7. They sleep themselves into pleasure, Job xxi. 12. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. The wicked are high, when God's people are low in the world: the goats clamber up the mountains of preferment, when Christ's sheep are blown in the valley of tears; the wicked are clothed in purple, while the godly are in sackcloth; the prosperity of the wicked is a great stumbling-block: this made *Averroes* deny a providence, and made *Asaph* say, Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, Ps. lxxiii. 12. But there is no cause of envy at their prosperity, if we consider two things.

1. This is all they must have, Luke xvi. 25. *Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things*: thou hadst all thy heaven here. *Luther* calls the Turkish empire a bone which God casts to dogs.

2. That God hath laid up better things for his children; he hath prepared a kingdom of glory for them; they shall have the beatifical vision; they shall hear the angels sing in concert; they shall be crowned with the pleasures of paradise for ever. O then envy not the flourishing prosperity of the wicked; they go thro' fair way to execution, and the godly go thro' foul way to coronation.

*7. Branch.* Is there a kingdom of glory a-comeing? Then see how happy all the saints are at death, they go to a kingdom; they shall see God's face, which shines ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian glory. The godly at death shall be installed into their honour, and have the crown-royal set upon their head. They have, in the kingdom of heaven, the quintessence of all delights; they have the water of life clear as crystal; they have all aromatic perfumes; they feed not on the dew of *Hermon*, but the manna of angels: they ly in Christ's bosom, that bed of spices. There

is such a pleasant variety in the happiness of heaven, that after millions of years it will be as fresh and desirable as at the first hour's enjoying. In the kingdom of heaven, the saints are crowned with all those perfections, which the human nature is capable of: the desires of the glorified saints are infinitely satisfied; there is nothing absent that they could wish might be enjoyed, there is nothing present that they could wish might be removed. They who are got into this kingdom would be loth to come back to the earth again, it would be much to their loss; they would not leave the fatness and sweetness of the olive, to court the bramble; the things which tempt us, they would scorn. What are golden bags to the golden beams of the sun of righteousness? In the kingdom of heaven there is glory in its highest elevation; in that kingdom is knowledge without ignorance, holiness without sin, beauty without blemish, strength without weakness, light without darkness, riches without poverty, ease without pain, liberty without restraint, rest without labour, joy without sorrow, love without hatred, plenty without surfeit, honour without disgrace, health without sickness, peace without war, contentation without cessation. O the happiness of those that die in the Lord, they go into this blessed kingdom! And if they are so happy when they die, then let me make two inferences.

1. *Infer.* What little cause have the saints to fear death? Are any afraid of going to a kingdom? what is there in this world should make us desirous to stay here? do we not see God dishonoured, and how can we bear it? is not this world a valley of tears, and do we weep to leave it? are not we in a wilderness among fiery serpents, and are we afraid to go from these serpents? Our best friend lives above: God is ever displaying the banner of his love in heaven, and is there any love like his? are there any sweeter smiles, or softer embraces than his? what news so welcome as leaving the world, and going to a kingdom? Christian, thy dying-day will be thy wedding-day, and dost thou fear it? is a slave afraid to be redeemed? is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Death may take away a few worldly comforts, but it gives that which is better; it takes away a flower, and gives a jewel; it takes away a short lease, and gives land of inheritance. If the saints possess a kingdom when they die, they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross



the sea, tho' tempestuous, if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came at shore.

2. *Infer.* If the godly are so happy when they die, they go to a kingdom; then, what little cause have we to mourn immoderately for the death of godly friends? shall we mourn for their preferment? why should we shed tears immoderately for them who have all tears wiped from their eyes? why should we be swallowed up of grief, for them who are swallowed up of joy? They are gone to their kingdom; they are not lost, but gone a little before; not perished, but translated, *Non amissi, sed præmissi*, Cyprian. They are removed for their advantage; as if one should be removed out of a sinoaky cottage to a palace. *Elijah* was removed in a fiery chariot to heaven: shall *Elisha* weep inordinately because he enjoys not the company of *Elijah*? Shall *Jacob* weep when he knows his son *Joseph* is preferred, and made chief ruler in *Egypt*? We should not be excessive in grief, when we know our Godly friends are advanced to a kingdom. I confess, when any of our relations die in their impenitency, there is just cause of mourning, but not when our friends take their flight to glory. *David* lost two sons, *Absalom* a wicked son, he mourned for him bitterly; he lost the child he had by *Bathsheba*, he mourned not when the child was departed. *St. Ambrose* gives the reason, *David* had a good hope, nay, assurance, that the child was translated into heaven, but he doubted of *Absalom*; he died in his sins, therefore *David* wept so for him, *O Absalom, my son, my son*. But though we are to weep to think any of our flesh should burn in hell, yet let us not be cast down for them who are so highly preferred at death as to a kingdom. Our Godly friends, who die in the Lord, are in that blessed estate, and are crowned with such infinite delights, that if we could hear them speak to us out of heaven, they would say, *weep not for us, but weep for yourselves*, Luke xxiii. 28. We are in our kingdom, weep not at our preferment; but *weep for yourselves*, who are in a sinful sorrowful world: you are tossing on the troublesome waves, but we are got to the haven; you are fighting with temptations, while we are wearing a victorious crown; *weep not for us, but weep for yourselves*.

8. *Branch.* See the wisdom of the Godly, they have the serpent's eye in the dove's head, *wife virgins*, Matth. xxv. 2. Their wisdom

appears in their choice, they choose that which will bring them to a kingdom, they choose grace, and what is grace but the seed of glory? They choose Christ with his cross, but this cross leads to a crown. *Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God*, Heb. xi. 25. It was a wise rational choice, he knew if he suffered he should reign. At the day of judgment, those whom the world accounted foolish will appear to be wise; they made a prudent choice, they chose holiness, and what is happiness but the quintessence of holiness? *They chose affliction with the people of God*; but through this purgatory of affliction they pass to paradise. God will proclaim the saints wisdom before men and angels.

9. *Branch.* See the folly of those who, for vain pleasures and profits, will lose such a glorious kingdom: like that cardinal of *France*, who said, *He would lose his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris*. I may say, as *Eccl. ix. 3. Madness is in their heart. Jysimachus*, for a draught of water, lost his empire; so for a draught of sinful pleasure these will lose heaven. We too much resemble our grandfather *Adam* who for an apple lost paradise: many for trifles, to get a shilling more in the shop or bushel, will venture the loss of heaven. This will be an aggravation of the sinners torment, to think how foolishly he was undone; for a flash of impure joy he lost an eternal weight of glory. Would it not vex one who is the lord of a manor to think he should part with his stately inheritance for a fit of music? Such are they who let heaven go for a song. This will make the devil insult at the last day to think how he hath gull'd men, and made them lose their souls and their happiness for *lying vanities*. If Satan could make good his brag, in giving all the glory and kingdoms of the world, it could not countervail the loss of the celestial kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven.

*Use II. Of reproof.*

1. *Branch.* It reproves such as do not at all look after this kingdom of glory; as if all we say about heaven were but a romance, they do not mind it. That they mind it not, appears, because they do not labour to have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts: if they have some thoughts of this kingdom, yet it is in a dull careless manner; they serve God, as if they served him not; they do not *vires exerere*, put forth their strength for the heavenly kingdom.



kingdom. How industrious were the saints of old for this kingdom? *Phil. iii. 13. Reaching forth unto those things which are before*; the Greek word is *epekteinominos*, stretching out the neck; a metaphor from racers, that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. *Luther* spent three hours a-day in prayer. *Anna, the prophetess, departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day, Luke ii. 37.* How zealous and industrious were the martyrs to get into this heavenly kingdom! they wore their fetters as ornaments, snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as *Elijah* did the fiery chariot, which came to fetch him to heaven; and do we not think this kingdom worth our labour? The great pains the heathens took in their *Olympic* race, when they ran but for a crown made of olive intermixed with gold, will rise up in judgment against such as take little or no pains in seeking after the kingdom of glory. The dulness of many in seeking after heaven is such, as if they did not believe there was such a kingdom; or as if it would not countervail their labour; or, as if they thought it were indifferent whether they obtained this kingdom or no, which is as much as to say, whether they were saved or no; whether they were crowned in glory, or chained as galley-slaves in hell for ever.

2. *Branch.* It reproves them who spend their sweat more in getting the world than the kingdom of heaven, *Phil. iii. 19. Who mind earthly things.* The world is the great *Diana* they cry up, as if they would fetch happiness out of the earth which God hath cursed; they labour for honour and riches. Many are like *Korah* and *Dathan*, the earth swallowed them up, *Numb. xvi. 32.* So the earth swallows up their time and thoughts: these, if they are not pagans, yet they are infidels; they do not believe there is such a kingdom: they go for Christians, yet question that great article in their faith, *life everlasting*: these, like the serpent, lick the dust. O what is there in the world, that we should so idolize it! when Christ and heaven are not regarded? What hath Christ done for you? Died for your sins: what will the world do for you? Can it pacify an angry conscience? Can it procure God's favour? Can it flee death? Can it bribe our judge? Can it purchase for you a place in the kingdom of heaven? O how are men bewitched with worldly profits and ho-

nours! that for these things they will let go paradise. It was a good prayer of *St. Bernard*, *Sic possideamus mundana, ut non perdamus æterna*-----Lo, let us so possess things temporal, that we do not lose things eternal.

3. *Branch.* It reproves such who delay and put off seeking this kingdom till it be too late; like the foolish virgins who came when the door was shut. *Mora trahit periculum.* People let the lamp of life blaze out; and when the symptoms of death are upon them, and they know not what else to do, now will look up to the kingdom of heaven: Christ bids them see God's kingdom first, and they will seek it last; they put off the kingdom of heaven to a death-bed, as if it were as easy to make their peace, as to make their will. How many have lost the heavenly kingdom, through delays and procrastinations? *Plutarch* reports of *Archias the Lacedemonian*, being among his cups, one delivered him a letter, and desired him to read it presently, being of serious business; saith he, *seria cras*, I will mind serious things to-morrow; and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, thou wilt look after the kingdom of heaven to-morrow, knowest not but that thou mayest be in hell before to-morrow: sometimes death comes suddenly, it strikes without giving warning. What folly is it putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven till the day of grace expire, till the radical moisture be spent? As if a man should begin to run a race when a fit of the gout takes him.

4. *Branch.* It reproves such as were once great zealots in religion, and did seem to be touched with a coal from God's altar, but since they have cooled in their devotion, and have left off the pursuing the celestial kingdom, *Hos. viii. 3. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good*: there is no face of religion to be seen; they have left off the house of prayer, and gone to play-houses; they have left off pursuing the heavenly kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. For want of a *supernatural principle of grace*. That branch must needs die, which hath no root to grow upon. That which moves from a principle of life lasts, as the beating of the pulse; but that which moves only from an artificial spring, when the spring is done, the motion ceaseth: the hypocrite's religion is artificial, not vital, he acts from the outward spring of applause or gain, and if that spring be down, his motion toward heaven ceaseth.



2. From unbelief, *Heb. iii. 12. An evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God. Ps. lxxviii. 22. They believed not in God. v. 41. They turned back.*—Sinners have hard thoughts of God, they think they may pray and hear, yet never the better: *Mat. iii. 14.* They question whether God will give them the kingdom at last; then they turn back, and throw away Christ's colours; they distrust God's love, no wonder then they desert his service: infidelity is the root of apostasy.

3. Men leave off pursuing the heavenly kingdom; it is from some secret lust nourished in the soul, perhaps a wanton or a covetous lust. *Demas* for love of the world forsook his religion, and afterwards turned a priest in an idol-temple. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Covetousness will make men betray a good cause, and make shipwreck of a good conscience: if there be any lust unmortified in the soul, it will bring forth the bitter fruit either of scandal or apostasy.

4. Men leave off pursuing the kingdom of heaven out of timorousness; if they persist in religion, they may lose their place of profit, perhaps their lives. The reason (saith *Aristotle*) why the camellion turns into so many colours, is through excessive fear. When carnal fear prevails, it makes men change their religion, as fast as the camellion doth its colours. Many of the *Jews* who were great followers of Christ, when they saw the swords and staves, deserted him. What *Solomon* saith of the sluggard, is as true of the coward, he saith, *there is a lion in the way*, *Prov. xxii. 13.* He sees dangers before him; he would go on the way to the kingdom of heaven, but there is a lion in the way. This is dismal, *Heb. x. 38. If any man draw back* (in the *Greek*, if he steals as a soldier from his colours) *my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

Use III. Of trial. Let us examine whether we shall go to this kingdom when we die: heaven is called a *kingdom prepared*, *Mat. xxv.*

Qu. *How shall we know this kingdom is prepared for us?*

Ans. If we are prepared for the kingdom.

Qu. *How may that be known?*

Ans. By being heavenly persons: an earthly heart is no more fit for heaven, than a clod of dust is fit to be a star: there is nothing of Christ or grace in such an heart. It were a miracle to find a pearl in a gold-mine; and it is as great a miracle to find Christ the pearl

of price in an earthly heart. Would we go to the kingdom of heaven? Are we heavenly?

1. Are we heavenly in our contemplations? Do our thoughts run upon this kingdom? Do we get sometimes upon mount *Pisgah*, and take a prospect of glory? Thoughts are as travellers: most of *David's* thoughts travelled heaven's road, *Ps. cxxxix. 17.* Are our minds heaven-lized? *Ps. xlviii. 12. Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks.* Do we walk into the heavenly mount, and see what a glorious situation it is? Do we tell the towers of that kingdom while a Christian fixeth his thoughts on God and glory, he doth as it were tread upon the borders of the heavenly kingdom, and he peeps within the veil: as *Moses*, who had a sight of *Canaan*, though he did not enter into it; so the heavenly Christian hath a sight of heaven; though he be not yet entred into it.

2. Are we heavenly in our affections? Do we set our affections on the kingdom of heaven? *Col. iii. 2:* If we are heavenly, we despise all things below in comparison of the kingdom of God; we look upon the world but as a beautiful prison, and we cannot be much in love with our fetters, though they are made of gold; *our heart is in heaven.* A stranger may be in a foreign land, to gather up his debts owing him, but he desires to be in his own kingdom and nation; so we are here a while in a strange land, but our desire is chiefly after the kingdom of heaven, where we shall be for ever. The world is the place of a saint's abode, not his delight: is it thus with us? Do we like the patriarchs of old, desire a better country; *Heb. xi. 16.* This is the temper of a true saint, his affections are set on the kingdom of God; his anchor is cast in heaven, and he is carried thither with the sails of desire.

3. Are we heavenly in our speeches? Christ, after his resurrection, did speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, *Acts i. 3. Are your tongues tuned to the language of the heavenly Canaan?* *Mal. iii. 16. Then they that feared the Lord, spake often to one another.* Do you in your visits season your discourses with heaven? There are many say, they hope they shall be saved, but you shall never hear them speak of the kingdom of heaven; perhaps of their wares and drugs, or of some rich purchase they have got but nothing of the kingdom. Can men travel together in a journey, and not speak a word of the place they are travelling to?

to? Are you travellers for heaven, and never speak a word of the kingdom you are travelling to? Herein many discover they do not belong to heaven, for you shall never hear a good word come from them, *verba iunt specula mentis*, Bern. The words are the looking-glass of the mind, they show what the heart is.

4. Are we heavenly in our trading? is our traffic and merchandize in heaven? do we trade in the heavenly kingdom by faith? A man may live in one place, and trade in another; he may live in *Ireland*, and trade in the *West-Indies*: so, do we trade in the heavenly kingdom? They shall never go to heaven when they die, who do not trade in heaven while they live. Do we send up to heaven volleys of sighs and groans? do we send forth the ship of prayer thither, which fetcheth in returns of mercy? is our communion with the Father and his Son Jesus? 1 John i. 3. Phil. iii. 20.

5. Are our lives heavenly? do we live as if we had seen the Lord with bodily eyes? do we emulate and imitate the angels in sanctity? do we labour to copy out Christ's life in ours? 1 John i. 6. 'Twas a custom among the *Macedonians*, on *Alexander's* birth-day; to wear his picture about their necks, set with pearl and diamond: do we carry Christ's picture about us, and resemble him in the heavenliness of our conversation? If we are thus heavenly, then we shall go to the kingdom of heaven when we die: and truly there is a great deal of reason why we should be thus heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider,

(1.) The main end why God hath given us our souls, is, that we may mind the kingdom of heaven: our souls are of a noble extraction, they are a-kin to the angels, a glass of the Trinity, as *Plato* speaks. Now, is it rational to imagine, that God would have breathed into us such noble souls only to look after sensual objects? were such bright stars made only to shoot into the earth? were these immortal souls made only to seek after dying comforts? Had this been only the end of our creation, to eat and drink, and converse with earthly objects, worse souls would have served us; sensitive souls had been good enough for us: what need our souls be rational and divine, to do only that work which a beast may do?

(2.) Great reason we should be heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we con-

sider what a blessed kingdom heaven is; it is beyond all hyperbole: earthly kingdoms do scarce deserve the names of cottages compared with it. We read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right-foot upon the sea, and with his left-foot on the earth, *Rev. x. 2.* Had we but once been in the heavenly kingdom, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot upon the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea? There are rivers of pleasure, gates of pearl, sparkling crowns, white robes; may not this make our hearts heavenly; it is an heavenly kingdom, and only such go into it as are heavenly.

Use IV. Of exhortation, To all in general.

1 Branch. If there be such a glorious kingdom to come, believe this great truth. *Socinians* deny it. The *Rubbins* say, the great dispute between *Cain* and *Abel* was about the world to come; *Abel* affirmed it, *Cain* denied it. This should be engraven upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond, there is a blessed kingdom in reversion, *Pf. lviii. 11.* *Doublets there is a reward for the righteous.* Let us not hesitate thro' unbelief; doubting of principles is the next way to denying them. Unbelief, as *Sampson*, would pull down the pillars of religion. Be confirmed in this, there is a kingdom of glory to come; whoever denies this, cuts asunder the main article of the creed, *life everlasting.*

2 Branch. If there be such a blessed kingdom of glory to come, let us take heed lest we miss of this kingdom; let us fear lest we lose heaven by short shooting. Trembling, in the body a malady, in the soul a grace. This fear is not a fear of diffidence or distrust, such a fear as discourageth the soul, for such a fear frights from religion, it cuts the sinews of endeavour; but this holy fear, lest we miss of the kingdom of heaven, is a fear of diligence; it quickens us in the use of means, and puts us forward that we may not fail of our hope, *Heb. xi. 6.* *Noah*, being moved with fear, prepared an ark. Fear is a watch-bell to awaken sleepy christians; it guards against security; it is a spur to a sluggish heart: he who fears he shall come short of his journey, rides the faster. And indeed this exhortation to fear, lest we miss of this kingdom, is most necessary, if we consider two things;

First, There are many who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have fallen short of it, *Mark xii. 34.* *Thou art not far from the kingdom*



kingdom of God; yet he was not near enough.

Qu. *How many steps may a man take in the way to the kingdom of God, yet miss of it?*

Ans. 1. He may be adorned with civility, he may be morally righteous, he may be prudent, just, temperate, he may be free from penal statutes; this is good, but not enough to bring a man to heaven.

2. He may hang out the flag of a glorious profession, yet fall short of the kingdom. The scribes and pharisees went far; they sat in Moses's chair, were expounders of the law; they prayed, gave alms, were strict in the observance of the sabbath; if one had got a thorn into his foot, they would not pull it out on the sabbath-day, for fear of breaking the sabbath; they were so externally devout in God's worship, that the Jews thought, that if but two in all the world went to heaven, the one should be a scribe, and the other a pharisee: but the mantle of their profession was not lined with sincerity; they did all for the applause of men, therefore they missed of heaven, *Matth. v. 20. Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God.*

3. A man may be a frequenter of ordinances, and yet miss of the kingdom. 'Tis a good sight to see people flock as doves to the windows of God's house; 'tis good to ly in the way where Christ passeth by: yet, be not offended, if I say, one may be an hearer of the word, and fall short of glory; Herod heard John Baptist gladly, yet beheaded John, instead of beheading his sin: the prophet Ezekiel's hearers did come with as much delight to his preaching, as one would do to a fit of music, *Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Thou art to them as a lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: they hear thy words, but they do them not.* What is it to hear one's duty, and not do it? As if a physician prescribe a good receipt, but the patient doth not take it.

4. A man may have some trouble for sin, and weep for it, yet miss of the heavenly kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. A sinner's tears are forced by God's judgments; as water which comes out of a still is forced by the fire. 2. Trouble for sin is transient, it is quickly over again. As some that go to sea are sea-sick, but when they come to land they are well again: so hypocrites may be sermon-sick, but this trouble doth not last,

the sick-fit is soon over. 2. A sinner weeps, but goes on in sin; his sins are not drowned in his tears.

5. A man may have good desires, yet miss of the kingdom, *Numb. xxiii. 10. O that I might die the death of the righteous!*

Qu. *Wherein do these desires come short?*

Ans. 1. They are sluggish. A man would have heaven, but will take no pains. As if one should say he desires water, but will not let down the bucket into the well, *Prov. xxi. 25. The desire of the slothful kills him, his hands refuse to labour.* 2. The sinner desires mercy, but not grace; he desires Christ as a saviour, but not as he is the *Holy One*; he desires Christ only as a bridge to lead him over to heaven. Such desires as these may be found among the damned.

6. A man may forsake his sins, oaths, drunkenness, uncleanness, yet come short of the kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. He may forsake gross sins, yet he hath no reluctancy against heart-sins, pride, unbelief, and the first risings of malice and concupiscence. Tho' he damms up the stream, yet he lets alone the fountain; tho' he lop and prune the branches, yet he doth not strike at the root of it. 2. Tho' he leaves sin (for fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury) yet he still loves sin, as if a snake should cast her coat, yet keep her poison, *Hos. iv. 8. They set their heart on their iniquity.* 3. 'Tis but a partial forsaking of sin; tho' he leaves one sin, he lives in some other. Herod reformed very much, *Mark vi. 20. He did many things*; but he lived in incest. Some leave drunkenness, and live in covetousness; they forbear swearing, and live in slandering. It is but a partial reformation, and so they miss of the kingdom of glory. Thus you see there are some who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have come short. Some have gone so far in profession, that they have been confident their estate hath been good, and they should go to the kingdom of heaven, yet have missed it, *Luke xiii. 25. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* How confident were these of salvation! they did not beseech, but knock, as if they did not doubt but to be let into heaven; yet to these Christ saith, *I know you not whence you are; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* Therefore fear and tremble,



tremble, lest any of us miss of this kingdom of heaven.

*Secondly*, This fear is necessary, if we consider what a loss it is to lose the heavenly kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven: they who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose God's sweet presence, the ravishing views and smiles of God's glorious face. God's presence is the diamond in the ring of glory, *Pf. xvi. 11. In his presence is fulness of joy.* If God be the fountain of all bliss, then, to be separated from him, is the fountain of all misery. They who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose the society of angels; and, what sweeter music, than to hear them praise God in concert? They lose all their treasure, their white robes, their sparkling crowns; they lose their hopes, *Job viii. 14. Whose hope shall be cut off.* Their hope is not an anchor, but a spider's web. If hope deferred makes the heart sick, *Prov. xiii. 12.* what then is hope disappointed? They lose the end of their being. Why were they created, but to be enthroned in glory? Now, to lose this, is to lose the end of their being, as if an angel should be turned to a worm. There are many aggravations of the loss of this heavenly kingdom.

1. The eyes of the wicked shall be opened to see their loss; now they care not for the loss of God's favour, because they know not the worth of it. A man that loseth a rich diamond, and took it but for an ordinary stone, is not much troubled at the loss of it; but when he comes to know what a jewel he lost, then he laments. He, whose heart would never break at the sight of his sins, shall now break at the sight of his loss. *Phineas* his daughter, when she heard the ark was lost, cried out, *The glory is departed*, *1 Sam. iv. 21.* When the sinner sees what he hath lost, he hath lost the beatifical vision, he hath lost the kingdom of heaven; now he will cry out in horror and despair, *The glory, the everlasting glory is departed.*

2. A second aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, that sinners shall be upbraided by their own conscience: this is the *worm that never dies*, *Mark ix. 44 viz. a self-accusing mind.* When sinners shall consider they were in a fair way to the kingdom; they had a possibility of salvation, tho' the door of heaven was strait, yet it was open; they had the means of grace; the jubilee of the gospel was proclaimed in their ears; God called, but they refused;

Jesus Christ offered them a plaister of his own blood to heal them, but they trampled it under foot; the holy Spirit stood at the door of their heart, knocking and crying to them to receive Christ and heaven, but they repulsed the Spirit, and sent away this dove; and now they have, thro' their own folly and wilfulness, lost the kingdom of heaven: this self-accusing conscience will be terrible; like a venomous worm gnawing at the heart.

3. A third aggravation of the loss of heaven will be, to look upon others that have gained the kingdom; the happiness of the blessed will be an eye-fore, *Luke xiii. 28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.* When the wicked shall see those whom they hated and scorned, to be exalted to a kingdom, and shine with robes of glory, and they themselves miss of the kingdom, this will be a dagger at the heart, and make them gnash their teeth for envy.

4. A fourth aggravation is, this loss of the kingdom of heaven is accompanied with the punishment of sense. He who leaps short of the bank, falls into the river; such as come short of heaven, fall into the river of fire and brimstone, *Pf. xc. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell:* and how dreadful is that! if, when but a spark of God's anger lights into the conscience here, it is so torturing, what will it be to have mountains of God's wrath thrown out upon the soul? *Pf. xc. 11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger?* The angel never poured out his vial, but some wo followed, *Rev. xvi. 3.* When the bitter vials of God's wrath are poured out, damnation follows. *Dives* cries out, *O I am tormented in this flame*, *Luke xvi. 24.* In hell there's not a drop of mercy. There was no oil or frankincense used in the sacrifice of jealousy, *Numb. v. 15.* In hell no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, nor incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

5. A fifth aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, to consider on what easy and reasonable terms men might have had this kingdom. If indeed God had commanded impossibles, to have satisfied justice in their own persons, it had been another matter; but what God did demand was reasonable, only to do that which was for their good, to accept of Christ for their lord and husband, only to part with that which would damn them, if they kept their



their sins; these were the fair terms on which they might have enjoyed the heavenly kingdom: now, to lose heaven, which might have been had upon such easy terms, will be a cutting aggravation; it will rend a sinner's heart with rage and grief, to think how easily he might have prevented the loss of the heavenly kingdom.

6. It will be an aggravation of the loss of heaven for sinners to think how active they were in doing that which lost them the kingdom; they were *felo de se*. What pains did they take to resist the Spirit, to stifle conscience? They sinned while they were out of breath, *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity.* What difficulties did men go through? what did they endure for their sins? how much shame and pain? how sick was the drunkard with his cups? how sore in his body was the adulterer? and what marks of sin did he carry about him? what dangers did men adventure upon for their lusts? They adventured God's wrath, and adventured the laws of the land. O how will this aggravate the loss of heaven! how will this make men curse themselves, to think how much pains they were at to lose happiness? how will this sting mens consciences, to think, had they but taken as much pains for heaven as they did for hell, they had not lost it.

7. Aggravation of the loss of this kingdom, it will be an eternal irreparable loss; heaven, once lost, can never be recovered. Worldly losses may be made up again: if a man lose his health, he may have it repaired by physic; if a man be driven out of his kingdom, he may be restored to it again, as king *Nebuchadnezzar* was, *Dan. iv. 36. My honour returned to me, and I was established in my kingdom.* King *Henry VI.* was deposed from his throne, yet restored again to it. But they who once lose heaven, can never be restored to it again: after millions of years, they are as far from obtaining glory as at first. Thus you see how needful this exhortation is, that we should fear lest we fall short of this kingdom of heaven.

Qu. *What shall we do, that we may not miss of this kingdom of glory?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of those things which will make you miss of heaven. 1. Take heed of spiritual sloth. Many christians are settled upon their lees, they are loth to put themselves to too much pains. It is said of *Israel, They despised the pleasant land, Ps. cvi. 24. Canaan*

was a paradise of delight, a type of heaven: ay, but some of the *Jews* thought it would cost them a great deal of trouble and hazard in the getting, and they would rather go without it; *They despised the pleasant land.* I have read of certain *Spaniards* that live where there is great store of fish, yet are so lazy, that they will not be at the pains to catch them, but buy of their neighbours; such a sinful sloth is upon the most, that tho' the kingdom of heaven be offered to them, yet they will not put themselves to any labour for it. They have some faint velleities and desires, O that I had this kingdom! Like a man that wisheth for venison, but will not hunt for it, *Prov. xiii. 4. The soul of the sluggard wisheth, and hath nothing.* Men could be content to have the kingdom of heaven, if it would drop as a ripe fig into their mouth, but they are loth to fight for it. O take heed of spiritual sloth; God never made heaven to be a hive for drones. We cannot have the world without labour, and, do we think to have the kingdom of heaven? Heathens will rise up in judgment against many christians: what pains did they take in their *Olympic* races, when they ran but for a crown of olive or myrtle intermixed with gold; and do we stand still when we are running for a kingdom? *Prov. xix. 15. Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.* Sloth is the soul's sleep. *Adam* lost his rib when he was asleep. Many a man loseth the kingdom of heaven when he is in this deep sleep of sloth.

2. Take heed of unbelief. Unbelief kept *Israel* out of *Canaan*, *Heb. iii. 19. So we see they could not enter in, because of unbelief.* And it keeps many out of heaven. Unbelief is an enemy to salvation, 'tis a damning sin; it whispers thus, To what purpose is all this pains for the heavenly kingdom? I had as good sit still; I may come near to heaven, yet come short of heaven, *Jer. xviii. 12. And they said, there is no hope.* Unbelief destroys hope; and if you once cut this sinew, a christian goes but lamely in religion, if he goes at all. Unbelief raiseth jealous thoughts of God, it represents him as a severe judge; this discourageth many a soul, and takes it off from duty. Beware of unbelief; believe the promises, *James iii. 25. God is good to the soul that seeks him; seek him earnestly, and he will open both his heart and heaven to you. Deus volentibus non deest;* do what you are able, and God will help you. While you spread the sails of your endeavour, God's spirit will

will blow upon these sails, and carry you swiftly to the kingdom of glory.

3. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of mistake, imagining the way to the kingdom of heaven to be easier than it is; 'tis but a sigh, or, Lord have mercy. There's no going to heaven *per saltum*; one cannot leap out of *Dalilah's* lap into *Abraham's* bosom. The sinner is *dead in trespasses*, Eph. ii. 1. Is it easy for a man to restore himself to life? is regeneration easy? and, do you fancy this easy? The way to the kingdom is not easy, but the mistake about the way is easy.

4. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of delays and procrastinations. *Mora trahit periculum*. It is an usual delusion, I will mind the kingdom of heaven, but not yet; when I have gotten an estate and grown old, then I will look after heaven: and, on a sudden, death surprizeth men, and they fall short of heaven. Delay strengthens sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man. Take heed of adjourning and putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven, till it be too late. *Cæsar*, deferring to read a letter put into his hand, was killed in the senate-house. Consider how short your life is; 'tis a taper soon blown out. *Animantis cujusque vita in fuga est*. The body is like a vessel tuned with breath, sickness broacheth it, death draws it out. Delay not the business of salvation a day longer; sometimes death strikes, and gives no warning.

5. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of prejudice. Many take a prejudice at religion, and on this rock dash their souls. They are prejudiced at Christ's person, his truths, his followers, his ways.

(1.) They are prejudiced at his person, *Mat. xiii. 57. And they were offended in him*. What is there in Christ, that men should be offended at him? He is the *pearl of price*, *Matth. xiii. 46*. Are men offended at pearls and diamonds? Christ is the wonder of beauty, *Pf. xlv. 2. Fairer than the children of men*. Is there any thing in beauty to offend? Christ is the mirror of mercy, *Heb. ii. 17*. Why should mercy offend any? Christ is a redeemer; why should a captive slave be offended at him who comes with a sum of money to ransom him? the prejudice men take at Christ is from the inbred perversity of their hearts. The eye that is sore cannot endure the light of the sun; the fault is not in

the sun, but in the sore eye. There are two things in Christ, men are prejudiced at: 1. His meanness. The *Jews* expected a monarch for their Messiah; but Christ came not with outward pomp and splendor: *his kingdom was not of this world*. The stars which are seated in the lightest orbs, are least seen: Christ, who is the bright morning-star, was not much seen; his divinity was hid in the dark lanthorn of his humanity; all who saw the man did not see the Messiah: this the *Jews* stumbled at, the meanness of his person. 2. Men are prejudiced at Christ's strictness; they look upon Christ as austere, and his laws too severe, *Pf. ii. 3. Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us*. Tho', to a saint, Christ's laws are no more burdensome than wings are to a bird; yet, to the wicked, Christ's laws are a yoke, and they love not to come under restraint; hence it is they hate Christ. Tho' they pretend to love him as a saviour, yet they hate him as he is the holy one.

(2.) Men are prejudiced at the truths of Christ. 1. Self-denial. A man must deny his righteousness, *Phil. iii. 9*. His duties and moralities; he will graft the hope of salvation upon the stock of his own righteousness. 2. He must deny his unrighteousness. The scripture seals no patents to sin; it teacheth us to *deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts*, *Tit. ii. 11*. We must divorce those sins which bring in pleasure and profit. 3. Forgiving of injuries, *Mark xi. 25*: These truths men are prejudiced at; they can rather want forgiveness from God, than they can forgive others.

(3.) Men are prejudiced at the followers of Christ. 1. Their paucity; there are but few (in comparison) that embrace Christ: but why should this offend? Men are not offended at pearls and precious stones, because they are but few. 2. Their poverty; many that wear Christ's livery are low in the world: but why should this give offence? 1<sup>st</sup>. Christ hath better things than these to bestow upon his followers; the holy anointing, the white stone, the hidden manna, the crown of glory. 2<sup>dly</sup>, All Christ's followers are not humbled with poverty; *Abraham* was rich with gold and silver, as well as rich in faith: tho' not many noble are called, yet some noble, *Acts xvii. 12. Honourable women which were Greeks believed*. *Constantine* and *Theodosius* were godly emperors. So that this stumbling-block is removed. 3. Their scandals. Some of Christ's followers, under a



mask of piety, commit sin; this begets a prejudice against religion: but doth Christ or his gospel teach any such thing? The rules he prescribes are holy; why should the master be thought the worse of, because some of his servants prove bad?

(4.) Men are prejudiced at the ways of Christ; they expose them to sufferings, *Mat. xvi. 24. Let him take up his cross and follow me.* Many stumble at the cross. There are, as *Tertullian, delicatuli*, silken christians, who love their ease; they will follow Christ to mount *Olivet*, to see him transfigured, but not to mount *Golgotha*, to suffer with him. But, alas, what is affliction to the glory that follows! The weight of glory makes affliction light. *Adimant caput, non coronam.* O take heed of prejudice; this hath been a stumbling-stone in mens way to heaven, and hath made them fall short of the kingdom.

6. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of presumption. Men presume all is well, and take it as a principle not to be disputed, that they shall go to heaven. The devil hath given them opium, to cast them into a deep sleep of security. The presumptuous sinner is like the leviathan, *made without fear*: he lives as bad as the worst, yet hopes he shall be saved as well as the best; *he blesteth himself and saith, he shall have peace, though he goes on in sin, Deut. xxix. 19.* As if a man should drink poison, yet not fear but he should have his health. But whence doth this presumptuous hope arise? Surely from a conceit that God is made up all of mercy. 'Tis true, God is merciful, but withal he is just too, *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, and that will by no means clear the guilty.* If a king did proclaim, that only those should be pardoned who came in and submitted; should any, still persisting in rebellion, claim the benefit of that pardon, dost thou hope for mercy, who wilt not lay down thy weapons, but stand out in rebellion against heaven? None might touch the ark but the priests; none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but holy, consecrated persons. Presumption is, *heluo animarum*, the great devourer of souls. A thousand have missed of heaven, by putting on the broad spectacles of presumption.

7. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of the delights and pleasures of the flesh: soft pleasures harden the heart, many people cannot endure a serious thought, but are for comedies and romances; they play

away their salvation. *Homines capiuntur voluptate, ut pisces hamo, Cicero.* Pleasure is the sugared bait men bite at, but there is an hook under, *Job xxi. 12. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the organ.* And a parallel scripture, *Amos vi. 4. That ly upon beds of ivory, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with chief ointments.* The pleasures of the world do keep many from the pleasures of paradise. What a shame is it, that the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is a-kin to angels, should be enslaved to sinful pleasure! *Beard*, in his theatre, speaks of one who had a room richly hung with fair pictures, he had most delicious music, he had the rarest beauties, he had all the candies and curious preserves of the confectioner; thus did he gratify his senses with pleasure, and swore he would live one week like a God, tho' he were sure to be damned in hell the next day. *Diodorus Siculus* observes, that the dogs of *Sicily*, while they are hunting among the sweet flowers, lose the scent of the hare; so, many, while they are hunting after the sweet pleasures of the world, lose the kingdom of heaven. 'Tis (saith *Theophylact*) one of the worst sights, to see a sinner go laughing to hell.

8. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of worldly-mindedness: a covetous spirit is a dunghill-spirit, it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world hindered the young man from following Christ, *abiit tristis*, he went away sorrowful, *Luke xviii. 23.* which extorted these words from our Saviour, *v. 24. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God? Divitiae saeculi sunt laquei diaboli, Bern.* Riches are golden snares. If a man were to climb up a steepy rock, and had weights tied to his legs, it would hinder him from his ascent: too many golden weights will hinder us from climbing up that steepy rock which leads to heaven, *Exod. xiv. 3. They are intangled in the land, the wilderiness hath shut them in.* So it may be said of many, they are intangled in earthly affairs, the world hath shut them in; the world is no friend to grace: the more the child sucks, the weaker the nurse is; and the more the world sucks and draws from us, the weaker our grace is, *1 John ii. 15. Love not the world.* Had a man a monopoly of all the wealth of the world; were he able to empty the western

western parts of gold and the eastern of spices; could he heap up riches to the starry heaven, yet his heart would not be filled: covetousness is a dry dropfy. *Joshua*, who could stop the course of the sun, could not stop *Achan* in his covetous pursuit of the wedge of gold; he whose heart is locked up in his chest, will be locked out of heaven. Some ships, that have escaped the rocks, have been cast away upon the sands; many, who have escaped gross sins, have been cast away upon the world's golden sands.

9. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of indulging any sin: one millstone will drown, as well as more; and one sin lived in will damn, as well as more. *Ubi regnat peccatum, non potest regnare dei regnum*, Hierom. If any one sin reign, it will keep you from reigning in the kingdom of heaven. Especially keep from sins of presumption, which waste conscience. *Vastare conscientiam*, Tertul. And the sin of your natural constitution; the *peccatum in deliciis*, Aug. The darling-sin, *Pf. xviii. 23. I have kept myself from mine iniquity*, that sin which my heart would soonest decoy and flatter me into. As in the hive there is one master-bee, so in the heart one master-sin: O take heed of this!

Qu. How may this sin be known?

Ans. (1.) That sin which a man cannot endure the arrow of reproof should shoot at, that is the bosom-sin: *Herod* could not brook to have his incest meddled with, that was a *noli-me-tangere*: men can be content to have other sins declaimed against; but if a minister put his finger upon the sore, and toucheth upon one special sin, then *igne micant oculi*, they are enraged, and spit the venom of malice.

2. That sin which a man's heart runs out most to, and he is most easy captivated by, that is the *Dalilah* in his bosom. One man is overcome with wantonness, another by worldliness. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a beloved sin, that, if it ask him to part with not only one half the kingdom, but the whole kingdom of heaven, he must part with it to gratify that lust.

3. That sin which doth most trouble a man and fly in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the sin he hath allowed himself in, and is his complexion-sin; when *Joseph's* brethren were distressed, their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, *Gen. xlii. 21. We are verily guilty concerning*

*our brother*, &c. So, when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, thou hast been guilty of such a sin, the sin of slandering, or uncleanness, conscience reads a man a sad lecture; it affrights him most for one sin, that is the complexion-sin.

4. That sin which a man is lothest to part with, that is the endeared sin: *Jacob* could of all his sons most hardly part with *Benjamin*, *Gen. xlii. 35. Will ye take Benjamin away?* So saith the sinner, this and that sin I have left, but must *Benjamin* go too? Must I part with this delightful sin? That goes to the heart. As it is with a castle that hath several forts about it; the first and second forts are yielded; but when it comes to the main castle, the governor will rather fight and die than yield that; so a man may suffer some of his sins to be demolished; but when it comes to one, that is like the taking of the castle, he will never yield to part with that; surely that is the master-sin. Take heed especially of this sin; the strength of sin lies in the beloved sin: this is like an humour striking to the heart, which brings death. I have read of a monarch, that being pursued by the enemy, he threw away the crown of gold on his head, that he might run the faster; so that sin, which thou didst wear as a crown of gold, throw it away, that thou mayst run the faster to the kingdom of heaven: O, if you would not lose the glory, mortify the beloved sin; set it, as *Uriah*, in the forefront of the battle to be slain: by plucking out his right-eye you shall see the better to go to heaven.

10. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of inordinate passion; many a ship hath been lost in a storm, and many a soul hath been lost in a storm of unruly passion. Every member of the body is infected with sin, as every branch of worm-wood is bitter; but *the tongue is full of deadly poison*, *James iii. 8.* Some care not what they say in their passion; they will censure, slander, wish evil to others: how can Christ be in the heart, when the devil hath taken possession of the tongue? Passion disturbs reason, it is *brevis insania*, a short frenzy. *Jonah* in a passion flies out against God, *Jon. iv. 9. I do well to be angry to the death.* What to be angry with God, and to justify it? I do well to be angry; the man was not well in his wits, passion unfits for prayer, *1 Tim. ii. 8. I will, therefore, that men pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath.* He



that prays in wrath, may lift up his hands in prayer, but he doth not lift up holy hands. Wrath, when it is hot, soon boils over; so, when the heart is heated with anger, it soon boils over in fiery passionate speeches. Some curse others in their passion: they whose tongues are set on fire, let them take heed that they do not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool their tongue. O, if you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, beware of giving way to your unbridled passions. Some say, words are but wind; but they are such a wind as may blow them to hell.

11. If you would not fall short of the heavenly kingdom, beware of too much indulging the sensual appetite, *Rom. xiii. 14. Make no provision for the flesh.* The Greek word, *pronoiat poicin*, to make provision, signifies to be caterers for the flesh, *Phil. iii. 19. Whose god is their belly.* The throat is a slippery place; Judas received the devil in the sop; and often the devil slides down in the liquor: excess in meat and drink clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust; many a man digs his own grave with his teeth: the heathens could say, *magnus sum & ad majora natus quam ut sim corporis mei mancipium*. Sen. He was higher born than to be a slave to his body. To pamper the body, and neglect the soul, is to feed the slave, and to starve the wife. Take such a proportion of food as may recruit nature, not surfeit it: excess in things lawful hath lost many the kingdom of heaven. A bee may suck a little honey from the leaf, but put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned: to suck temperately from the creature, God allows; but excess ingulphs men in perdition.

12. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of injustice in your dealings; defrauding lies in two things, *first*, mixing commodities: as if one mix bad wheat with good, and sell it for pure wheat, this is to defraud, *Isa. i. 22. Thy wine is mixed with water, second.* Giving scant measure, *Amos v. 8. Making the ephah small.* Ephah was a measure which the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, they scarce give measure. I wish this be not the sin of many, *Hos. xii. 7. He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.* Can they be holy, which are not just? *Micah vi. 11. Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances?* Is his heart sincere, who hath false weights? This hath made many they could not reach heaven, because of their over-reaching.

13. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of evil company: there is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, else, as the apostle saith, *We must go out of the world*, *1 Cor. v. 10.* but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked, *1 Cor. v. 11. I have written to you not to keep company.* Do not incorporate into the society of the wicked, or be too much familiar with them: the wicked are God-haters; and, *2 Chron. xix. 2. Shouldst thou join with them that hate the Lord?* A Christian is bound by virtue of his oath of allegiance to God in baptism, not to have intimate converse with such as are God's sworn enemies; it is a thing of bad report: what doth Christ's dove among birds of prey? What do virgins among harlots. The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague, *Prov. vi. 27. He that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled.* *Pl. clx. 35. They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.* If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Such as have had religious education, and have some inclinations to good, yet by mixing among the wicked, they will be apt to receive hurt: the bad will sooner corrupt the good than the good will convert the bad. Pharaoh learned Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not learn Pharaoh to pray. There is a strange attractive power in ill company to corrupt and poison the best dispositions; they damp good affections. Throw a fire-ball into the snow, and it is soon quenched. Among the wicked you lose your heat of zealous affections: by holding familiar correspondence with the wicked, one shall hear them dissuading him from strict Godliness, that it will debar him of his liberty and pleasure, *Acts xxviii. 2. This sect is every where spoken against.* Hereupon he, who before did look towards heaven, begins to be discouraged, and gradually declines from goodness.

(1.) There steals upon him a dislike of his former religious course of life; that he was righteous over-much, stricter than needed.

(2.) There is instilled into his heart a secret delight of evil: he begins to like foolish scurrilous discourse; he can hear religion spoken against, and be silent, nay, well pleased; he loves vanity, and makes a sport of sin.

(3.) He is by degrees so metamorphosed. And made like the company he converseth with, that he now grows into a disgust and hatred

hatred of his former sober ways; he is ill-affected towards good men, he is transformed into scoffing *Ishmael*, a breathing devil; and becomes at last as much as the child of hell, as any of that graceless damned crew he conversed with: and what is the end of all? A blot in the name, a moth in the estate, a worm in the conscience. 13. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, beware of evil company. Bad company is the bane and poison of the youth of this age: such as were once soberly inclined, yet by coming among the profane, they grow familiar, till at last they keep one another company in hell.

14. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of parlying with the fleshly part; the flesh is a bosom-traitor. When an enemy is gotten within the walls of a castle, it is in great danger to be taken. The flesh is an enemy within: the flesh is a bad counsellor; the flesh saith, there is a lion in the way; it discourageth from a religious strictness: the flesh saith, *waste?* as *Peter* did to Christ, *spare thyself*: the flesh saith, as *Judas*, *what needs all this waste?* What needs this praying? Why do you waste your strength and spirits in religion? What needs all this waste? The flesh cries out for ease and pleasure. How many, by consulting with the flesh, have lost the kingdom of heaven!

15. If you would not fall short of heaven, take heed of carnal relations: our carnal friends are often bars and blocks in our way to heaven: they will say, religion is preciseness and singularity. A wife in the bosom may be a tempter; *Job's* wife was so, *Job* ii. 9. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God, and die.* What still pray? What dost thou get by serving God? *Job*, where are thy earnings? What canst thou show thou hast had in God's service, but boils and ulcers? And dost thou still retain thy integrity? Throw off God's livery, renounce religion. Here was a temptation handed over to him by his wife: the woman was made of the rib, the devil turned this rib into an arrow, and would have shot *Job* to the heart, but his faith quenched this fiery dart. Beware of carnal relations: we read that some of Christ's kindred laid hold on him, and would have hindered him when he was going to preach, *Mark* iii. 21. *They said, he is beside himself.* Our kindred sometimes would stand in our way to heaven, and, judging all zeal rashness, would hinder us from being saved: such carnal rela-

tions *Spiri* had; for, advising with them whether he should remain constant in his orthodox opinion, they persuaded him to recant; and so, abjuring his former faith, he fell into horror and despondency of mind. *Galeacius* marquis of *Vico*, found his carnal relations a great block in his way; and what ado had he to break through their tentations? Take heed of a snare in your bosom. It is a brave saying of *Jerom*, *si mater mihi ubera ostendat*, &c. If my parent should persuade me to deny Christ, if my mother should show me her breast that gave me suck, if my wife should go to charm me with her embraces, I would forsake all, and fly to Christ.

16. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of falling off; beware of apostacy; he misseth of the prize, who doth not hold out in the race; he who makes shipwreck of the faith, cannot come to the haven of glory. We live in the fall of the leaf: men fall from that goodness they seemed to have; some are turned to error, others to vice; some to drinking and dicing, and others to whoring; the very mantle of their profession is fallen off: It is dreadful for men to fall off from hopeful beginnings. The apostate (saith *Tertulian*) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and, having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master; in which respect, the apostate is said to put Christ to open shame, *Heb.* vi. 6. This is said at last, *Heb.* x. 38. If you would not miss of the glory, take heed of apostacy; those who fall away, must needs fall short of the kingdom.

1. If we would not come short of this heavenly kingdom, let us be much in the exercise of self-denial, *Mat.* xvi. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.* He who would go to heaven must deny self-righteousness. *Cavendum est a propria justitia*; *Phil.* iii. 9. *That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness.* The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels; an hypocrite would spin a web of salvation out of his own righteousness, we must deny our civility in point of justification. Civility is a good staff to walk with among men, but it is a bad ladder to climb up to heaven. We must deny our holy things in point of justification. Alas, how are our duties chequer'd with sin! put gold in the fire, and there comes out dross; our most golden services are mix'd with unbelief. Deny self-righteousness; use duty, but trust to Christ. *Noah's* dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted



trusted to the ark for safety: let duties have your diligence, but not your confidence. Self-denial is *via ad regnum*; there is no getting into heaven, but through the strait gate to self-denial.

2. The second means for the obtaining of the kingdom, is serious consideration: most men fall short of heaven, for want of consideration.

1. *Consideration.* We should often consider what a kingdom heaven is: it is called *regnum paratum*, a kingdom prepared, *Mat. xxv. 34.* which implies something that is rare and excellent. God hath prepared in his kingdom, *such things as eye hath not seen nor ear heard*, *1 Cor. ii. 9.* Heaven is beyond all hyperbole. In particular, in this celestial kingdom are two things. (1.) A stately palace. (2.) A royal feast.

(1.) A stately palace. (1.) It is large, and hath several stories: for the dimensions of it, it is twelve thousand furlongs, *Rev. xxi. 15.* Or, as it is in some *Greek* copies, twelve times twelve thousand furlongs, a finite number put for an infinite; no arithmetician can number these furlongs: though there be an innumerable company of saints and angels in heaven, yet there is infinitely enough of room to receive them. (2.) The palace of this kingdom is lucid and transparent; it is adorned with light, *the light is sweet*. Hell is a dark dungeon, but the palace above is bespangled with light, *Col. i. 12.* Such illustrious beams of glory shine from God; as shed a brightness and splendour upon the empirean heaven. (3.) This palace of the kingdom is well situated for a good air and a pleasant prospect: there is the best air, which is perfumed with the odours of Christ's ointments; and a most pleasant prospect of the bright morning star. (4.) The palace is rich and sumptuous; it hath gates of pearl. *Rev. xxi. 21.* It is enriched with white robes and crowns of glory; and this palace never falls to decay, and the dwellers in it never die. *Rev. xxii. 5. They shall reign for ever and ever.*

(2.) A royal feast. It is called, *the marriage-supper of the lamb*, *Rev. xix. 9.* Which *Bullinger* and *Gregory* the great, understand of the magnificent supper prepared in the kingdom of heaven. A glorious feast it will be, in respect of the founder, God; the glorified saints shall feast their eyes with God's beauty and their hearts with his love; a delicious feast

it will be, in respect of the festivity and holy mirth; what joy when there shall be the Anthems and triumphs of glorified spirits? When saints and angels shall twist together in an inseparable union of love, and ly in each others sweet embraces: a royal banquet it shall be, where there is no surfeit, because continually a fresh course is served in. The serious consideration what a kingdom heaven is, would be a means to quicken our endeavour in the pursuit after it. What causeth men to make voyages to the *Indies*, but the consideration of the gold, and spices which are to be had there? Did we survey and contemplate the glory of heaven, we should soon take a voyage, and never leave till we had arrived at the celestial kingdom.

2. *Consideration*, how it will trouble you, if you should perish, to think you came short of heaven for want of a little more pains. The prophet *Elisba* bid the king of *Israel* smite the ground six times, and he smote but thrice, and stayed, *2 Kings xiii. 19.* And he lost many victories by it; so, when a man shall think thus, I did something in religion, but did not do enough, I prayed, but it was coldly; I did not put coals to the incense; I heard the word, but did not meditate on it, I did not chew the cud; I smote but thrice, and I should have smitten six times; had I taken a little more pains, I had been happy, but I have lost the kingdom of heaven by short-shooting: the consideration how terrible the thoughts of this will be, that we should lose heaven for want of a little more pains, will be a means to spur on sluggish hearts, and make us more diligent to get the kingdom.

3. The third means for obtaining this kingdom, is to keep the daily prayer, *Pf. cix. 4. I give myself to prayer.* Prayer inflames the affections, and oils the wheels of endeavour: prayer prevails with God, it unlocks his bowels, and then he unlocks heaven; all that have got to heaven, have crept thither upon their knees: the saints now in heaven, have been men of prayer; *Daniel* prayed three times a day, *Jacob* wrestled with God in prayer, and as a prince prevailed: this prayer must be fervent, else it is *thuribulum sine prunis*, as *Luther*, a golden censer without fire. O follow God with prayers and tears; say as *Jacob* to the angel, *Gen. xxxii. 26. I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* Prayer *invincibilem*; *Luther*, it conquers the Omnipotent, *Elijah* by prayer opened heaven; by

by ardent and constant prayer, heaven is at last opened to us.

4. If you would obtain the heavenly kingdom, get a love to heaven. Love puts a man upon the use of all means to enjoy the thing loved. He that loves the world, how active is he? He will break his sleep and peace for it: he that loves honour, what hazards will he run? He will swim to the crown in blood. *Jacob* loved *Rachel*, and what would not he do, tho' it were serving a two seven-years apprenticeship for obtaining her? Love carries a man out violently to the object loved. Love is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship, it carries a Christian full sail to heaven: heaven is a place of rest and joy, it is paradise, and will you not love it? Love heaven, and you cannot miss it: love breaks through all opposition, it takes heaven by storm: love, though it labour, is never weary; it is like the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which makes him fresh and lively in his travel, and keeps him from being weary.

5. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, make religion your business. What a man looks upon as a *parergon*, a thing by the by, he doth not much mind. If ever we would have heaven, we must look upon it as our main concern, other things do but concern our livelihood, this concerns our salvation; then we make religion our business, when we wholly devote ourselves to God's service, *Pf.* cxxxix.

18. We count those the best hours which are spent with God; we give God the cream of our affections, the flower of our time and strength; we traffic in heaven every day, we are merchants for the *pearl of price*. He will not get an estate who doth not mind his trade; he will never get heaven, who doth not make religion his main business.

6. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, bind your hearts to God by sacred vows. Vow to the Lord, (that by his grace) you will be more intent upon heaven than ever, *Pf.* lvi.

12. *Thy vows are upon me, O God.* A vow binds the votary to duty; he looks upon himself as obliged by his vow to cleave to God. Bees, when they fly in a great wind, ballast themselves with little stones, that they may not be carried away with the wind; so we must fortifie ourselves with strong vows, that we may not be carried away from God with the violent wind of temptation. No question, a Christian may make such a vow, because the ground of it is

morally good; he vows nothing but what he is bound to do by virtue of his baptismal vow, namely, to walk with God more closely, and to pursue heaven more vigorously.

7. If you would obtain the kingdom, embrace all seasons and opportunities for your souls, *Eph.* v. 15. *Redeeming the time.* Opportunity is the cream of time; the improving the seasons of grace is as much as our salvation is worth. The mariner, by taking the present season while the wind blows, gets to the haven; by taking the present season, while we have the means of grace and the wind of the spirit blows, we may arrive at the kingdom of heaven. We know not how long we shall enjoy the gospel; the seasons of grace, like *Noah's* dove, come with an olive branch in their mouth, but they soon take wings and fly. Though they are sweet, yet swift. God may remove the golden candlestick from us, as he did from the churches of *Asia*. We have many sad symptoms *Gray hairs are here and there upon us*, *Hos.* vii. 9. Therefore let us lay hold upon the present seasons; they that sleep in seed-time, will beg in harvest.

8. If you would go to the kingdom of heaven, you must *excubias agere*, keep a daily watch, *Mark* xiii. 37. *I say unto all, watch.* Many have lost heaven for want of watchfulness. Our hearts are ready to decoy us into sin, and the devil lies in ambush by his temptations; we must every day set a spy; and keep centinel in our souls, *Hab.* ii. 1. *I will stand upon my watch.*

(1.) We must watch our eyes, *Job* xxxi. 1. *I made a covenant with my eyes.* Much sin comes in by the eye: *When Eve saw the tree was good for food, and pleasant for the eye, then she took*, *Gen.* iii. 6. First she looked, and then she lusted: the eye by beholding an impure object, sets the heart on fire: the devil oft creeps in at the window of the eye. Watch your eyes.

(2.) Watch your ear. Much poison is conveyed through the ear. Let your ear be open to God, and shut to sin.

(3.) Watch your hearts: we watch suspicious persons, *The heart is deceitful*, *Jer.* xvii. 9. Watch your heart, 1. When you are about holy things, it will be stealing out to vanity. When I am at prayer, saith *St. Hierom*, *aut per porticum deambulo, aut de foenere computo*; either I am walking through galleries, or casting up accounts. 2. Watch your hearts when you are



are in company. The *Basilisk* poisons the herbs he breathes on; the breath of the wicked is infectious. Nay, watch your hearts when you are in good company; such as have some good in them, yet may be some grains too light; they may have much levity of discourse; and, if no scum boils up, yet too much froth. The devil is subtil, and he can as well creep into the dove, as he did once into the serpent. Satan tempted Christ by an apostle. 3. Watch your hearts in prosperity; now you are in danger of pride. The higher the water of the *Thames* riseth, the higher the boat is lifted up; the higher that mens estates rise, the higher their hearts are lifted up in pride. In prosperity, you are in danger not only to forget God, but to lift up the heel against him, *Deut. xxxii. 15. Jesurun waxed fat, and kicked.* It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and to carry a full prosperous estate without sinning. *Turpi fregerunt secula luxu divitiarum molles.* Sen. Trag. *Samson* fell asleep in *Dalilah's* lap, many have fallen so fast asleep in the lap of prosperity, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell. 4. Watch your hearts after holy duties. When Christ had been praying and fasting, then the devil tempted him, *Mat. iv. 23.* After our combating with Satan in prayer, we are apt to grow secure, and put our spiritual armour off, and then the devil falls on and wounds us. O if you would get heaven, be always upon your watch-tower, set a spy, keep close sentinel in your souls; who would not watch when it is for a kingdom?

9. If you would arrive at the heavenly kingdom, get those three graces, which will undoubtedly bring you thither.

(1.) Divine knowledge: there is no going to heaven blindfold. In the creation, light was the first thing that was made; so it is in the new creation: knowledge is the pillar of fire that goes before us, and lights us into the heavenly kingdom. It is light must bring us to the *Inheritance in light*, *Col. i. 12.*

(2.) Faith: faith ends in salvation, *1 Pet. i. 9. Receiving the end of our faith, salvation.* He who believes, is as sure to go to heaven, as if he were in heaven already, *Acts xvi. 31.* Faith toucheth Christ; and can he miss of heaven, who toucheth Christ? Faith unites to Christ; and, shall not the members be where the head is? All have not the same decree of faith; we must distinguish between the direct act of faith, and the reflex act, assiance and assurance; yet the

least seed and spark of faith gives an undoubted title to the heavenly kingdom. I am justified because I believe, not because I know I believe.

(3.) Love to God: heaven is prepared for those that love God, *1 Cor. ii. 9.* Love is the soul of obedience, the touch-stone of sincerity, by our loving God, we may know he loves us, *1 John iv. 19.* And those whom God loves, he will lay in his bosom. *Ambrose*, in his funeral oration for *Theodosius*, brings in the angels hovering about his departed soul, and being ready to carry it to heaven, asked him, *what that grace was he had practised most upon earth?* *Theodosius* replied, *Dilexi, Dilexi, I have loved, I have loved;* and straightway he was, by a convoy of angels, translated to glory. Love is a sacred fire kindled in the breast; in the flames of this fire, the devout soul ascends to heaven.

10. If we would obtain this heavenly kingdom, let us labour for sincerity, *Pro. xxviii. 18. Whosoever walketh uprightly, shall be saved.* The sincere Christian may fall short of some degrees of grace, but he never falls short of the kingdom; God will pass by many failings, where the heart is right, *Numb. xxiii. 21.* True gold, though it be light, hath grains of allowance, *Pf. li. 6. Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.* Sincerity is the sauce which seasons all our affections, and makes them savoury; it is the ingredient into every grace: it is called *faith unfeigned*, *2 Tim i. 5.* and *love in sincerity*, *Eph. vi. 24.* Coin will not go current that wants the king's stamp; grace is not current, if it be not stamped with sincerity. Glorious duties sowed with hypocrisy are rejected, when great infirmities sweetened with sincerity are accepted. If any thing in the world bring us to heaven, it is sincerity. Sincerity signifies plainness of heart, *Pf. xxxii. 2. In whose spirit there is no guile.* The plainer the diamond is the richer.

(1.) Sincerity is when we serve God with our heart; we do not only worship him, but love him. *Cain* brought his sacrifice, but not his heart: this is God's delight, a sacrifice flaming upon the altar of the heart. A sincere Christian, though he hath a double principle in him, flesh and spirit, yet he hath not a double heart, his heart is for God.

(2.) Sincerity is when we aim purely at God in all we do. The glory of God is more worth than the salvation of all mens souls. A sincere Christian, though he comes short in duty, yet

he takes a right aim. As the herb *Heliotropium* turns about according to the motion of the sun; so a godly man's actions do all move towards the glory of God.

11. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us keep up fervency in duty. What is a dead form without the power? *Rev. iii. 16. Because thou art luke-warm, neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* Fervency puts life into duty, *Rom. xii. 11. Fervent in spirit, serving God, Gr.---Zeotes, boiling over.* Christ prayed yet more earnestly, *Luke xxii. 44.* When the fire on the golden censer was ready to go out, *Aaron* was to put more coals to the incense; praying with devotion, is putting more coals to the incense. It is not formality, but fervency, will bring us to heaven: the formalist is like *Ephraim*, a cake not turned, hot on one side, and dough on the other. In the external part of God's worship, he seems to be hot; but, as for the spiritual part of God's worship, he is cold. Oh, if you would have the kingdom of heaven, keep up heat and fervour in duty. *Elijah* was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot; if you would go to heaven, you must be carried thither in a fiery chariot of zeal: it is violence that takes the kingdom of heaven.

12. If we would arrive at the heavenly kingdom, let us cherish the motions of God's spirit in our hearts. The mariner may spread his sails, but the ship cannot get to the haven without a gale of wind; so we may spread the sails of our endeavour, but we cannot get to the haven of glory, without the north and south-wind of God's spirit's blow; how nearly therefore doth it concern us to make much of the motions of God's spirit, motions to prayer, motions to repentance? *2 Sam. v. 24. When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt bestir thy self, for then shall the Lord go out before thee:* So, when we hear, as it were a voice within us, a secret inspiration stirring us up to good duties, we should then bestir ourselves; while the spirit works in us, we should work with the spirit. Many men have God's spirit striving with them, he puts good motions in their hearts and holy purposes; but they, neglecting to prosecute these good motions, the spirit is thereby grieved; and, being grieved, withdraws its assistance; and, that assistance being gone, there is no getting to heaven. Oh make much of the motions of the spirit, it is as

much as your salvation is worth. The spirit of God is compared to fire, *Acts ii. 2.* if we were careful to blow this spark, we may have fire to inflame our affections, and to light our feet into the way of peace. If we quench the spirit by our neglecting and resisting its motions, we cut ourselves off from salvation. The spirit of God hath a drawing power, *Cant. i. 4.* The blessed spirit draws by attraction, as the load-stone the iron. In the preaching of the word, the spirit draws the heart up to heaven in holy longings and ejaculations. Now when the spirit is about thus to draw us, let us take heed of drawing back lest it be to perdition, *Heb. x.* We should do as *Noah*, when the dove came flying to the ark, he put forth his hand and took it into the ark; so when this sweet dove of God's spirit comes flying to our hearts, and brings a gracious impulse as an olive-branch of peace in its mouth, O take this dove into the ark; entertain the spirit in your hearts, and it will bring you to heaven.

*Qu. But how shall we know the motions of the spirit from a delusion?*

*Ans.* The motions of the spirit are always agreeable to the word. If the word be for holiness, so is the spirit: the spirit persuades to nothing but what the word directs; which way the tide of the word runs, that way the wind of the spirit blows.

13. We obtain the kingdom of heaven by uniform and cheerful obedience; obedience is the road through which we travel to heaven. Many say they love God, but refuse to obey him; doth he love the prince's person who slight his commands?

(1.) Obedience must be uniform, *Pf. cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, [Heb.] I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments.* As the sun goes through all the signs of the Zodiac, so must we go through all the duties of religion: if a man be to go an hundred miles, and he comes ninety nine miles, and there stops, he comes short of the place he is to travel to; if, with *Herod*, we do many things that God commands, yet, if we ly in the total neglect of any duty, we come short of the kingdom of heaven: for instance, if a man seem to make conscience of duties of the first table, and not the duties of the second; if he seem to be religious, but is not just, he is a transgressor, and is in danger to lose heaven; a good heart is like the needle which



points that way which the load-stone draws, so he moves that way which the word draws.

2. Obedience must be cheerful; *I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart*, Ps. xl. 8. That is the sweetest obedience which is cheerful, as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb freely. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness, *Zech. v. 9. There came out two women, and the wind was in their wings*. Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness: an emblem of the swiftness and cheerfulness which should be in obedience. We go to heaven in the way of obedience.

14. If we would obtain this kingdom, be much in the communion of saints; one coal of juniper will warm and inflame another; when the heart is dead and frozen, the communion of saints will help to warm it, *Mal. iii. 16. They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another*. Christians should never meet (saith Mr. Bolton) but speak of their meeting together in heaven. One Christian may be very helpful by prayer and conference to another, and give him a lift towards heaven. Old *Latimer* was much strengthened and comforted, by hearing Mr. *Bilney's confession of faith*. We read, that when *Moses* his hands were heavy, and he was ready to let them fall, *Aron* and *Hur* stayed up his hands, *Exod. xvii. 12*. A Christian who is ready to faint under temptation, and lets down the hands of his faith, by conversing with other Christians, he is strengthened, and his hands are held up. A great benefit of holy conference is counsel and advice: if a man (saith *Chrysostom*) who hath but one head to advise him, could make that head an hundred heads to advise him, he would be very wise: a single Christian hath this benefit by the communion of saints, they are as so many heads to advise him what to do in such a case or exigency: by Christian conference the saints can say, *did not our hearts burn within us?* Communion of saints we have in our creed, but it is too little in our practice: men usually travel faster in company, we travel faster to heaven in the communion of saints.

15. If we would attain to this kingdom of heaven, let us be willing to come up to Christ's terms. Many will be cheapning, and bid something for the kingdom of heaven, they will avoid gross sin, and will come to church

and say their prayers; and yet all this while they are not willing to come up to God's price, that is, they will not renounce the idol of self-righteousness, flying only to Christ as to the horns of the altar; they will not sacrifice their bosom-sin; they will not give God spirit-worship, serving him with zeal and intenseness of soul, *John iv. 24*. They will not forgive their enemies; they will not part with their carnal profits for Christ; they would have the kingdom of heaven, but they will not come up to the price: if you would have this kingdom, do not article and indent with Christ, but accept of his terms; say, Lord, I am willing to have the kingdom of heaven whatever it cost me; I am willing to pluck out my right-eye, to part with all for the kingdom; here is a blank paper I put in to thy hand; Lord, write thy own articles, I will subscribe to them.

16. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us attend to the holy ordinances, thus God brings souls to heaven, *Acts xxi. 37. Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved*. Some people would leap out of the ship of ordinances, and then God knows whither they leap; but except ye abide in the ship of ordinances, ye cannot be saved. Especially, if you would get to heaven, attend to the word preached: it was by the ear, by our first parents listening to the serpent, that we lost paradise; and it is by the ear, by the hearing the word, that we get to heaven, *Isa. lv. Hear, and your souls shall live*. God, sometimes in the preaching of the word, drops in that holy oil into the ear, which softens and sanctifies the heart: the word preached is called the *ministry of the spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8. because the spirit of God makes use of this engine to convert souls. If the word preached doth not work upon men, nothing will; not judgment, or miracles; no, nor though one should arise from the dead, *Luke xvi. 31*. If a glorified saint should come out of heaven, and assume a body, and tell you of all the glory of heaven, and the joys of the blessed, and persuade you to believe; if the preaching of the word will not bring you to heaven, neither would his rhetoric do it who rose from the dead. In heaven there will be no need of ordinances, but there is while we live here: the lamp needs oil, but the star needs none. While the saints have their lamp of grace burning here, they need the oil of ordinances to be continually dropping upon them; but there will be no need of this oil when they are stars in heaven. If you intend



intend to get to heaven, be swift to hear; for faith comes by hearing, *Rom. x. 14, 17.* Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. If you would have heaven's door opened to you, wait at the posts of wisdom's door.

17. If you would arrive at heaven, have this kingdom ever in your eye: our blessed Lord looked at the joy that was set before him; and Moses had an eye to the recompense of reward, *Heb. xi. 26.* Let the kingdom be much in our thoughts; meditation is the means to help us to heaven.

Qu. How doth it help?

Ans. 1. As it is a means to prevent sin. No sword like this to cut asunder the sinews of temptation; it is almost impossible to sin presumptuously with the lively thoughts and hopes of heaven: It was when Moses was out of sight that Israel set up a calf, and worshipped it; so it is when the kingdom of heaven is out of sight, I mean, out of men's thoughts, that they set up their lusts, and idolize them. The meditation of heaven banisheth sin; he who thinks of the weight of glory, throws away the weight of sin.

2. To meditate on the kingdom of heaven, would excite and quicken obedience. We should think we could never pray enough, never love God enough, who hath prepared such a kingdom for us. *Immensum gloria calcar habet.* St. Paul had heaven in his eye, he was once caught up thither; and how active was he for God? *1 Cor. ii. 10.* This would oil the wheels of obedience.

3. It would make us strive after holiness, because none but such are admitted into this kingdom, only the pure in heart shall see God. Mat.

5. Holiness is the language of heaven, it is the only coin will pass current in heaven; this considered would make us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God, *2 Cor. vii. 1.*

Thus you see how the meditation of heaven would be a means to bring us thither.

18. The last means for obtaining the heavenly kingdom is perseverance in holiness, *Rev. ii. 10.* Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive the crown of life. In Christians, *non initia sed fines laudantur.* Hierom.

1. Is there such a thing as persevering?

2. How doth a Christian come to persevere?

3. What are the encouragements?

4. What helps?

1. Is there such a thing as persevering till we come to heaven? The *Arminians* deny it; and truly that any one holds out to the kingdom, is a wonder, if you consider,

1. What a world of corruption is mingled with grace: grace is apt to be stifled, as the coal to be choaked with its own ashes: grace is oft like a spark in the sea, it is a wonder it is not quenched; it is a wonder sin doth not do to grace as sometimes the nurse to the child, overlay it, that it die; so that this infant of grace is not smothered.

2. The implacable malice of Satan; he envies that we should have a kingdom, when he himself is cast out; it cuts him to the heart to see a piece of dust and clay be made a bright star in glory, and he himself an angel of darkness; he will *Acheronta movere*, move all the powers of hell to hinder us from the kingdom; he spits his venom, shoots his fiery darts, raiseth a storm of persecution, yea, and prevails against some, *Rev. xii. 4.* There appeared a great red dragon, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven; and did cast them to the earth. By the red dragon is meant the heathenish empire; now when his tail cast so many to the earth, it is a wonder that any of the stars keep fixed in their orb.

3. The blandishments of riches: the young man in the gospel went very far, *thou art not far from the kingdom of God*; but he had rich possessions, and these golden weights hindered him from the kingdom, *Luke xviii. 23.* Jonathan pursued the battle till he came at the honey-comb, and then he stood still, *1 Sam. xiv. 27.* Many are forward for heaven, till they taste the sweetness of the world; but when they come at the honey-comb, then they stand still, and go no further. *Fœnus pecuniæ funis animæ.* Those who have escaped the rocks of gross sins, yet have been cast away upon the golden sands: what a wonder therefore that any doth hold on till he come to the kingdom!

4. A wonder any holds out in grace, and doth not tire in his march to heaven, if you consider the difficulty of a Christian's work; he hath no time to ly fallow, he is either watching or fighting; nay, a Christian is to do those duties which to the eye of sense and reason seem inconsistent: while a Christian doth one duty, he seems to cross another, e.g. He must come with holy boldness to God in prayer, yet must serve him with fear; he must



mouſt for ſin, yet rejoyce; he muſt be contented, yet covet: 1 *Cor.* xii. 32. Contemn men's impieties, yet reverence their authority: what difficult work is this? A wonder any ſaint arrives at the heavenly kingdom. To this I might add, the evil examples abroad, which are ſo attractive, we may ſay, the devil's are come among us in the likenefs of men. What a wonder is it that any ſoul perſeveres till he comes to the kingdom of heaven? But as great a wonder as it is, there is ſuch a thing as perſeverance. A ſaint's perſeverance is built upon two immutable pillars.

(1.) God's eternal love: we are inconstant in our love to God; but he is not ſo in his love to us, *Jer.* xxxi. 9. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love*; with a love of eternity. God's love to the elect is not like a king's love to his favourite, when it is at the higheſt ſpring-tide, it ſooner ebbs; but God's love is eternized: God may deſert, not diſinherit; he may change his love into a frown, not into hatred; he may alter his providence, not his decree; when once the ſun-ſhine of God's electing love is riſen upon the ſoul, it never ſets finally.

2. A ſaint's perſeverance is built upon the covenant of grace; it is a firm, impregnable covenant: this you have in the words of the ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael*, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5. *God hath made with me an everlaſting covenant ordered in all things and ſure*. It is a ſweet covenant, that God will be our God; the marrow and quinteſſence of all bleſſing: and it is a ſure covenant, that he will put his fear in our heart, and we ſhall never depart from him, *Jer.* xxxii. 40. This covenant is inviolable, cannot be broken; indeed ſin may break the peace of the covenant, but it cannot break the bond of the covenant.

(3.) The third pillar perſeverance is built upon, is the myſtical union: believers are incorporated into Chriſt, they are knit to him as members to the head, by the nerve and ligament of faith, that they cannot be broken off, *Eph.* v. 23. What was once ſaid of Chriſt's natural body, is as true of his myſtical body. *John* xix. 36. *A bone of it ſhall not be broken*. As it is impoſſible to ſevere the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled, ſo it is impoſſible when Chriſt and believers are once united, ever by the power of death or hell to be ſeparated: how can Chriſt loſe any member of his body and be perfect? You ſee upon what ſtrong pillars the ſaints perſeverance is built.

2. *Qu.* How doth a Chriſtian hold on till he comes to the kingdom? How doth he perſevere?

*Anſ.* 1. *Auxilio ſpiritus*: God carries on a Chriſtian to perſeverance by the energy and vigorous working of his ſpirit. The ſpirit maintains the eſſence and ſeed of grace, it doth blow up the ſparks of grace into a holy flame. *Spiritus eſt vicarius Chriſti*, Tertul. It is Chriſt's deputy and proxy; it is every day at work in a believer's heart, exerting grace in exerciſe, and ripening it into perſeverance: the ſpirit doth carve and poliſh the veſſels of mercy, and make them fit for glory.

2. Chriſt cauſeth perſeverance, and carries on a ſaint till he come to the heavenly kingdom, *vi orationis*, by his interceſſion: Chriſt is an advocate as well as a ſurety; he prays that the ſaints may arrive ſafe at the kingdom, *Heb.* vii. 25. *Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt*, (i. e. perfectly) *ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them*. That prayer he made for *Peter* on earth, he prays now in heaven for the ſaints, *that their faith fail not*, *Luke* xxii. 32. *that they may be with him where he is*, *John* xvii. 24. And ſure, if he pray that they may be with him in his kingdom, they cannot periſh by the way: Chriſt's prayer is efficacious. If the ſaint's prayers have ſo much force and prevalency in them: *Jacob* had power with God, and as a prince prevailed, *Hos.* xii. 4. By prayer *Elijah* unlocked heaven: if the prayers of the ſaints have ſo much power with God, then, what hath Chriſt's prayer? How can the children of ſuch prayers miſcarry? How can they fall ſhort of the kingdom, who have him praying for them, who is not only a prieſt, but a ſon? and beſides, what he prays for as he is man, that he hath power to give as he is God. Thus you ſee how a Chriſtian comes to perſevere till he comes to the kingdom.

*Obj.* But methinks I hear ſome Chriſtian ſay, if only perſeverance obtains the kingdom, they fear they ſhall not come thither; they fear they ſhall ſaint by the way, and the weak legs of their grace will never carry them to the kingdom of heaven.

*Anſ.* Wert thou indeed to ſtand in thy own ſtrength, thou mightſt fall away: that branch withers and dies which hath no root to grow upon. Thou groweſt upon the root Chriſt, who will be daily ſending forth vital influence to ſtrengthen thee; thou art imbecil and weak in grace, yet fear not falling ſhort of heaven: For,

1. God hath made a promise to weak believers; what is a bruised reed, but an emblem of a weak faith? yet it hath a promise made to it, *Mat. xii. 20. A bruised reed he will not break.* And hath promised to supply the weak Christian with so much grace as he shall need, till he comes to heaven. Beside the two-pence which the good Samaritan left to pay for the cure of the poor wounded man, he passed his word for all that he should need beside, *Luke x. 35.* So Christ doth not only give a little grace in hand, but his bond for more, that he will give as much grace as a saint shall need till he comes to heaven, *Pf. lxxxiv. 11. The Lord will give grace and glory*; that is, a fresh supply of grace, till he be perfected in glory.

2. God hath most care of his weak saints, who fear they shall never hold out till they come to the kingdom. Doth not the mother tend the weak child most? *Isa. 40. 11. He will gather the Lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.* If thou thinkest that thou art so weak that thou shalt never hold out till thou comest to heaven, thou shalt be carried in the arms of the Almighty; he gathers the lambs in his arms: Christ the lion of the tribe of Judah marched before his people, and his power is their reward, so that none of them faint or die in their march to heaven.

Qu. 3. *What are the encouragements to make Christians hold on till they come to the kingdom of heaven?*

Ans. 1. It is a great credit to a Christian, not only to hold forth the truth, but to hold fast the truth till he comes to heaven; when grace doth flourish into perseverance, and with the church of Thyatira, our last works are more than our first, *Rev. ii. 19.* this is *insigne honoris*, a star of honour. It is matter of renown, to see gray hairs shine with golden virtues: the excellency of a thing lies in the finishing of it. What is the excellency of a building not when the first stone is laid, but when it is finished: so the beauty and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished his faith, having done his work, is landed safe in heaven.

2. You that have made a progress in religion, have not many miles to go before you come at the kingdom of heaven, *Rom. xiii. 11. Now is your salvation nearer than when we believed.* You who have hoary hairs, your green tree is turned into an almond-tree; you are near to heaven; it is but going a little further and you will set your feet on heaven-

gates: oh therefore now be encouraged to hold out, your salvation is nearer than when you first began to believe. Our diligence should be greater when our salvation is nearer. When a man is almost at the end of the race, will he now tire and faint? Will he not put forth all his strength, and strain every limb, that he may lay hold upon the prize? Our salvation is now nearer; the kingdom is as it were within sight; how should we now put forth all our strength, that we may lay hold upon the garland of glory? Doctor Taylor, when he was going to his martyrdom, *I have (with he) but two stiles to go over, and I shall be at my Father's house.* Though the way to heaven be up-hill, you must climb the steepy rock of mortification; and though there be thorns in the way, *viz.* sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, you are within a few days march of the kingdom; and will not you persevere? Christian, pluck up thy courage, fight the good fight of faith, pursue holiness; it is but a while and you shall put off your armour, and end all your weary marches, and receive a victorious crown; your salvation is nearer, you are within a little of the kingdom, therefore now persevere, you are ready to commence and take your degree of glory.

3. The blessed promise annexed to perseverance; the promise is a crown of life, *Rev. ii. 10.* Death is a worm that feeds in the crowns of princes, but behold here a living crown, and a never-fading crown, *1 Pet. v. 4.* And *Rev. ii. 28.* He that overcometh, and keepeth my words to the end, I will give him *stellam matutinam*, the morning-star; the morning-star is brighter than the rest. This morning-star is meant of Christ; as if Christ had said, I will give to him that perseveres some of my beauty; I will put some of my illustrious rays upon him; he shall have the next degree of glory to me, as the morning-star is next the sun: will not this animate and make us hold out? We shall have a kingdom, and that which is better than the kingdom, a bright morning-star.

Qu. (4.) *What are the means conducing to perseverance, or, what shall we do that we may hold out to the kingdom?*

Ans. 1. Take up religion upon good grounds, not in a fit or humour, or out of worldly design; but be deliberate, weigh things well in the balance, *Luke xiv. 28. Which of you intending to build*



*build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?* Think with yourselves what religion must cost you, it must cost you the parting with your sins; and what it may cost you, it may cost you the parting with your lives: consider if a kingdom will not countervail your sufferings. Weigh things well, and then make your choice, *Pf. cxix. 30. I have chosen the way of thy truth.* Why do many apostatize and fall away, but because they did never sit down and count the cost.

2. If we would hold out to the kingdom. Let us cherish the grace of faith, *1 Cor. i. 24. By faith ye stand.* Faith, like *Hercules's* club, it beats down all opposition before it; it is a conquering grace.

Qu. *How comes faith to be so strong?*

Ans. Faith fetcheth Christ's strength into the soul, *Phil. iv. 13.* A captain may give his soldier armour, but not strength: faith partakes of Christ's strength, and faith gets strength from the promise; as the child by sucking the breast gets strength, so doth faith by sucking the breast of the promise; hence faith is such a wonder-working grace, and enables a Christian to persevere.

3. If you would hold out to the kingdom, set before your eyes the examples of those noble, heroick saints, who have persevered to the kingdom: *vivitur exemplis*, examples have more influence upon us than precepts, *Job xxiii. 11, 12. My foot hath held his steps.* Though the way of religion hath flints and thorns in it, my foot hath held his steps; I have not fainted in the way, nor turned out of the way. *Daniel* held on his religion, and would not intermit prayer, though he knew the writing was signed against him, and a prayer might cost him his life, *Dan. vi. 10.* The blessed martyrs persevered to the kingdom through sufferings. *Saunders* that holy man said, *welcome the cross of Christ; my Saviour begun to me in a bitter cup, and shall I not pledge him?* Another martyr kissing the state said, *I shall not lose my life, but change it for a better; instead of coals I shall have pearls.* What a spirit of gallantry was in these saints! Let us learn constancy from their courage. A soldier, seeing his general fight valiantly, is animated by his example, and hath new spirits put into him.

4. Let us add fervent prayers to God, that he would enable us to hold out to the heavenly kingdom, *Pf. cxix. 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.* Let us not presume on our own

strength. When *Peter* cried to Christ on the water, *Lord save me*, then Christ took him by the hand, *Mat. xiv. 30.* But when he grew confident of his own strength, then Christ let him fall. O pray to God for auxiliary grace. The child is safe when held in the nurse's arms: so are we in Christ's arms. Let us pray that God will put his fear in our hearts, that we do not depart from him; and that prayer of *Cyprian*, *Domine, quod coepisti perfice, ne in portu naufragium accidas*, Lord perfect that which thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.

3. *Branch.* Let us press forward with the greatest diligence to this kingdom. And here let me lay down some powerful persuasives, or divine arguments, to make you put to all your strength for the obtaining this blessed kingdom.

1. This is the great errand for which God hath sent us into the world, to prepare for this heavenly kingdom, *Mat. vi. 33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God.* First in time before all things; and first in affections, above all things. Great care is taken for the achieving worldly things, *Mat. vi. 25.* To see people labouring for the earth, as ants above a molehill, would make one think this were the only errand they came about: but, alas! What is all this to the kingdom of heaven? I have read of a devout pilgrim travelling to *Jerusalem*, who passing through several cities, where he saw many stately edifices, ware and monuments, he would say, *I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem*: so when we enjoy worldly things, peace and plenty, and have our presses burst out with new wine, we should say to ourselves, this is not the kingdom, we are to look after, this is not heaven: it is wisdom to remember our errand. It will be but sad upon a death-bed for a man to think he was busying himself only about trifles, playing with a feather, and neglected the main thing he came into the world about.

2. The seeking after the heavenly kingdom will be judged most prudent by all men at last. Those who are most regardless of their souls now, will, before they die, wish they had minded eternity more. When conscience is awakned, and men begin to come to themselves, now what would they give for the kingdom of heaven? How happy were it, if men were of the same mind now, as they will be at death? Death will alter men's opinions; then those who

who did most slight and disparage the ways of religion, will with their time and thoughts had been taken up about the excellent glory. At death men's eyes will be opened, and they will see their folly when it is too late. If all men, even the worst, will wish at last they had minded the kingdom of heaven, why should not we do that now, which all will wish they had done when they come to die.

3. This kingdom of heaven deserves our utmost pains and diligence; it is glorious, beyond hyperbole. Suppose earthly kingdoms more magnificent than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire, yet they are not comparable to the heavenly kingdom. If the pavement of it be bespangled with so many bright shining lights glorious stars, what is the kingdom it self? 1 *John* iii. 2. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* This kingdom exceeds our faith. How sublime and wonderful is that place where the blessed Deity shines forth in his immense glory, infinitely beyond the comprehension of angels!

(1.) The kingdom of heaven is a place of *honour*; there are the glorious triumphs and sparkling crowns. In other kingdoms, there is but one king, but in heaven all are kings, *Rev.* i. 6. Every saint glorified partakes of the same glory as Christ doth, *John* xvii. 22. *The glory thou hast given me, I have given them.*

(2.) This kingdom is a place of joy, *Mat.* xxv. 21. *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* To have a continual aspect of love from God's face, to be crowned with immortality, to be as the angels of God, to drink of the rivers of pleasure for ever, this will cause raptures of joy. Sure it deserves our utmost pains in pursuing and securing this kingdom. *Julius Caesar* coming towards *Rome* with his army, and hearing the senate and people fled from it, said, *they that will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for?* If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for? It was the speech of the spies to their brethren, *Judg.* xviii. 9. *We have seen the land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.* We have had a lively description of the glory of heaven, we find the kingdom is very good; why then do we sit still? Why do we not *operam navare*, put forth our utmost zeal and industry for this kingdom? The diligence of

others in seeking after earthly kingdoms, shames our coldness and indifferency in pursuing after the kingdom of heaven.

4. The time we have to make sure of the heavenly kingdom is very short and uncertain; take heed it doth not slip away before you have prepared for the kingdom. Time passeth on apace, *cito pede praeterita vita*: it will not be long before the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl broken, *Eccl.* xii. The skin wherein the brains are inclosed as in a bowl, this golden bowl will soon be broken. Our soul is in our body, as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks, and the bird flies out; the shell of the body breaking, the soul flies into eternity. We know not whether we shall live to another sabbath: before we hear of another sermon-bell go, our passing-bell may go. Our life runs as a swift stream into the ocean of eternity. Brethren, if our time be so minute and transient, if the taper of life be so soon wattled, or perhaps blown out by violent death, how should we put to all our strength, and call in help from heaven, that we may obtain the kingdom of glory? If time be so short, why do we waste it about things of less moment, and neglect the *one thing needful*, which is the kingdom of heaven? A man that hath a great work to be done, and but one day for the doing of it, had need work hard: we have a great work to do, we are striving for a kingdom, and, alas! we are not certain of one day to work in; therefore what need have we to bestir ourselves, and what we do for heaven, to do it with all our might?

5. To excite our diligence, let us consider how inexcusable we shall be, if we miss of the kingdom of heaven. Who have had such helps for heaven as we have had? *Indians* who have mines of gold, have not such advantages for glory as we; they have the light of the sun, moon and stars, and the light of reason, but this is not enough to light them to heaven: but we have had the light of the gospel shining in our horizon; we have been lifted up to heaven with ordinances; we have had the word in season and out of season. The ordinances are the pipes of the sanctuary, which empty the golden oil of grace into the soul; they are *scala Paradisi*, the ladder by which we ascend to the kingdom of heaven, *Deut.* iv. 7. *What nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* We have had heaven



heaven and hell set before us, we have had counsels of friends, warnings, examples, the motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost; how should all these spurs quicken us in our pace to heaven? Should not that ship sail apace to the haven, which hath wind and tide to carry it? The tide of ordinances, and the wind of the spirit. Surely if we, through negligence, miss of the kingdom of heaven, we shall have nothing to say for ourselves; we shall be as far from excuse as from happiness.

6. You cannot do too much for the kingdom of heaven: you cannot pray too much, sanctify the sabbath too much, love God too much; you cannot overdo. In secular things a man may labour too hard, he may kill himself with working; but there is no fear of working too hard for heaven. *In virtute non est verendum ne quid nimium sit*, Seneca. The world is apt to censure the godly, as if they were too zealous, and did overstrain themselves in religion. Indeed a man may follow the world too much, he may make too much haste to be rich: the ferry-man may take in too many passengers into his boat, to the sinking of his boat; so a man may heap up so much gold and silver, as to sink himself in perdition, *1 Tim. vi. 9*. But one cannot be too earnest and zealous for the kingdom of heaven; there is no fear of excess here, when we do all we can for heaven, we come short of the golden rule set us, and of Christ's golden pattern; when our faith is highest, like the sun in the meridian, yet still there is something lacking in our faith, *1 Thess. iii. 1*. so that all our labour for the kingdom is little enough. When a Christian hath done his best, yet still he hath sins, and wants to bewail.

7. By this you may judge of the state of your souls, whether you have grace or no, by your earnest pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. Grace infuseth a spirit of activity into a person; grace doth not only ly dormant in the soul; it is not a sleepy habit, but it makes a Christian like a seraphim, swift and winged in his heavenly motion: grace is like fire, it makes one burn in love to God; and, the more he loves him, the more he presseth forward to heaven, where he may fully enjoy him. Hope is an active grace, it is called a *lively hope*, *1 Pet. i. 3*. Hope is like the spring in the watch, it sets all the wheels of the soul a running; hope of a crop makes the husbandman sow his seed; hope of victory makes the soldier

fight; and a true hope of glory makes a Christian vigorously pursue glory. Here is a spiritual touchstone to try our grace by: if we have the anointing of the spirit, it will oil the wheels of our endeavour, and make us lively in our pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. No sooner had *Paul* grace infused but presently, *Behold he prays*, *Acts ix. 11*. The affections are by divines called *the feet of the soul*; if these feet move not towards heaven, it is because there is no life.

8. Your labour for heaven is not lost: perhaps you may think it is in vain that you have served God; but known that your pains are not lost. The seed is cast into the earth, and it dies, yet at last it brings forth a plentiful crop; so our labours seem to be fruitless, but at last they bring you to a kingdom. Who would not work hard for one hour, when, for that hour's work, he should be a king as long as he lived? And let me tell you, the more labour you have put forth for the kingdom of heaven, the more degrees of glory you shall have. As there are degrees of torment in hell, *Mat. xxii. 14*. so of glory in heaven. As one star differs from another in glory, so shall one saint, *1 Cor. xxv. 41*. Though every vessel of mercy shall be full, yet one vessel may hold more than another. Such as have done more work for God, shall have more glory in the heavenly kingdom. Could we hear the saints departed speaking to us from heaven, sure they would speak after this manner: were we to leave heaven a while; and live on the earth again, we would do God a thousand times more service than ever we did; we would pray with more life, act with more zeal; for now we see, the more hath been our labour, the greater is our reward in heaven.

9. While we are labouring for the kingdom, God will help us, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27*. *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*. The promise encourageth us, and God's spirit enableth us. A master gives his servant work to do, but he cannot give him strength to work: but God, as he cuts us out work, so he gives us strength, *Psa. lxxxvi. 16*. *Give thy strength unto thy servant*. God not only gives us a crown when we have done running, but gives us legs to run; he gives exciting, assisting grace; *lex jubet, gratia juvat*: the spirit helping us in our work for heaven, makes it easy. If the load-stone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: If God's

spirit

Spirit draws the heart, now it moves towards heaven with facility and alacrity.

10. The more pains we have taken for heaven, the sweeter heaven will be when we come there. As when an husbandman hath been grafting trees, or setting flowers in his garden, it is pleasant to review and look over his labours; so, when in heaven we shall remember our former zeal and earnestness for the kingdom, it will sweeten heaven, and add to the joy of it. For a christian to think, such a day I spent in examining my heart, such a day I was weeping for sin; when others were at their sport, I was at prayer; and now, have I lost any thing by my devotion? My tears are wiped away, and the wine of paradise cheers my heart; I now enjoy him whom my soul loves, I am possessed of a kingdom; my labour is over, but my joy remains.

11. If you do not take pains for the kingdom of heaven now, there will be nothing to be done for your souls after death: this is the only fit season for working; and if this season be lost, the kingdom is forfeited, *Eccles. ix. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* It was a saying of Charles V. *I have spent my treasure, but that I may recover again; I have lost my health, but that I may have again; but I have lost a great many brave soldiers, but them I can never have again.* So other temporal blessings may be lost and recovered again; but if the term of life, wherein you should work for heaven, be once lost, it is past all recovery, you can never have another season again for your souls.

12. There is nothing else but this kingdom of heaven we can make sure of; we cannot make sure of life. *Quis scit an adjiciant bodi-erne crassina vitæ tempora dii superi?* Hor. When our breath goes out, we know not whether we shall draw it in again? how many are taken away suddenly? We cannot make riches sure, it is uncertain whether we shall get them; the world is like a lottery, every one is not sure to draw a prize: or, if we get riches, we are not sure to keep them, *Prov. xxxv. 5. Riches make themselves wings and fly.* Experience seals to the truth of this. Many who have had plentiful estates; yet, by fire, or losses at sea, they have been squeezed as sponges, and all their estates exhausted: but if men should keep their estates a while, yet death strips them of all;

when death's gun goes off, away flies the estate, *1 Tim. vi. 7. It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world:* so that there is no making sure at any thing here below, but we may make sure of the kingdom of heaven, *Prov. xi. 18. To him that worketh righteousness is a sure reward.* He who hath grace is sure of heaven, for he hath heaven begun in him. A believer hath an evidence of heaven, *Heb. xii. 1. Faith is the evidence of things not seen.* He hath an earnest of glory, *2 Cor. i. 22. Who hath also given us the earnest of his spirit.* An earnest is part of the whole sum. He hath a sure hope, *Heb. vi. 19. Which hope we have as an anchor.* This anchor is cast upon God's promise, *Tit. i. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.* So that here is great encouragement to take pains for heaven, we may make sure of this kingdom.

13. The kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained without labour. *Non est ad astra mollis e terris via.* A boat may as well get to land without oars, as we to heaven without labour. We cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have heaven! If a man digs for gravel, much more for gold, *Phil. iii. 14. I press toward the mark.* Heaven-gate is not like that iron-gate which opened to Peter of its own accord, *Acts xii. 10.* Heaven is not like those ripe figs which fall into the mouth of the eater, *Nah. iii. 12.* No, there must be taking pains. Two things are requisite for a christian, a watchful eye, and a working hand. We must, as Hannibal, force a way to the heavenly kingdom through difficulties. We must win the garland of glory by labour, before we wear it with triumph. God hath enacted this law, *That no man shall eat of the tree of paradise, but in the sweat of his brows:* how then dare any censure christian-diligence? how dare they say, you take more pains for heaven than needs. God saith, *Strive as in an agony, fight the good fight of faith;* and they say, you are too strict: but who shall we believe? An holy God that bids us strive, or a profane atheist that saith we strive too much?

14. Much of our time being already mispent, we had need work the harder for the kingdom of heaven; he who hath lost his time at school, and often played truant, had need ply it the harder, that he may gain a stock of learning: he who hath slept and loitered in the beginning of his journey, had need ride the faster in the evening, lest he fall short of the place he is

H h h

travelling



travelling to. Some here present are in their youth, others in the flower of their age, others have grey hairs, the almond-tree blossoms, and perhaps they have been very regardless of their souls or heaven. Time spent unprofitably is not time lived, but time lost : if there be any such here, who have mis-spent their golden hours, they have not only been slothful, but wasteful servants ; how had you need now to redeem the time, and press forward with might and main to the heavenly kingdom ? 1 Pet. iv.

3. *The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles.* It may suffice us that we have lost so much time already, let us now work the harder : such as have crept as snails, had need now fly as eagles to the paradise of God ; if, in the former part of our life, you have been as willows, barren in goodness, in the latter part be as an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, Cant. iv. 13. Recompense former remissness with future diligence.

15. How uncomely and sordid a slothful temper of his soul is, Zeph. i. 1, 2. *I will punish the men who are settled on their lees :* Heb. *Curdled on their lees.* *Settling on the lees*, is an emblem of a dull unactive soul. The snail, by reason of its slow motion, was reckoned among the unclean, Lev. xi. 30. *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom*, Prov. xix. 24. he is loth to pull it out, tho' it be to lay hold on a crown. *Non capit porta illa cœlestis torpore languidos*, Brogenf. The devil himself cannot be charged with idleness, 1 Pet. v. 8. *He walketh about.* An idle soul stands in the world for a cypher, and God writes down no cyphers in the book of life ; heaven is no hive for drones ; an idle person is fit for a temptation. When the bird sits still upon the bough, then it is in danger of the gun ; when one sits still in sloth, then the devil shoots him with a temptation : standing water putrifies. Heathens will rise up in judgment against supine Christians ; what pains did they take in the *Olympic* games ? they ran but for a garland of flowers, or olive ; and do we sit still who run for a kingdom ? how can he expect a reward that never works, or a crown that never fights ? *Inertia animæ seminus.* Sloth is the soul's sleep. Adam when he was asleep lost his rib ; and when a person is in the deep sleep of sloth, he loseth salvation.

16. Holy activity and industry doth enoble a christian. *Labor splendore decoratur*, Cicero. The more excellent any thing is, the more ac-

tive. The sun is a glorious creature, it is ever in motion, going its circuit : fire is the purest element, and the most active, 'tis ever sparkling and flaming : the angels are the most noble creatures, they are represented by the cherubims, with wings displayed. The more active for heaven, the more illustrious, and the more do we resemble the angels. The phenix flies with a coronet on its head ; the industrious soul hath his coronet, his labour is his ensign of honour.

17. It is a mercy that there is a possibility of happiness, and that upon our pains taking we may have a kingdom : by our fall in Adam we forfeited heaven : why might not God have dealt with us as with the lapsed angels ? They had no sooner sinned, but were expelled heaven, never to come thither more ; we may say, as the apostle, Rom. xi. 22., *Behold the goodness, and severity, of God.* To the apostate angels, behold the severity of God, that he should throw them down to hell for ever ; to us, behold the goodness of God, that he hath put us into a possibility of mercy ; and, if we do but take pains, there is a kingdom stands ready for us : how may this whet and sharpen our industry, that we are in a capacity of salvation ? and, if we do but what we are able, we shall receive an eternal weight of glory.

18. Our labour for the kingdom of heaven is minute and transient, it is not to endure long ; our labour expires with our life : 'tis but a while and we shall leave off working ; for a little labour an eternal rest. Who would think much to wade through a little water, that were sure to be crowned as soon as he came at shore ? Christians, let this encourage you, you have but a little more pains to take, a few tears more to shed, a few more sabbaths kept, and behold an eternal recompence of reward : what are a few tears to a crown ? a few minutes of time to an eternity of glory ?

19. What striving is there for earthly kingdoms, which are corruptible, and subject to change ? with what vigour and alacrity did *Hannibal's* soldiers continue their march over the *Alps*, and craggy rocks, and *Cesar's* soldiers fight with hunger and cold ? Men will break thro' laws and oaths, they will swim to the crown in blood : will they venture thus for earthly promotions, and shall not we strive more for an heavenly kingdom ? This is a kingdom, which cannot be shaken, Heb. xxi. 28. a kingdom where there is unparallelled beauty, unstained honour, unmixed



unmixed joy; a kingdom where there shall be nothing present which we could with were removed, nor nothing absent which we could with were enjoyed. Sure if there be any spark of grace, or true generosity in our breasts, we will not suffer ourselves to be out-striven by others; we will not let them take more pains for earthly honours, than we do for that excellent glory which will crown all our desires.

20. How much pains do some men take to go to hell, and shall not we take more pains to go to heaven? *Jer. ix. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity.* Sinners hackney themselves out in the devil's service: what pains do some men take to satisfy their unclean lusts! They waste their estates, wear the shameful marks of their sin about them; they will visit the harlot's house, tho' it stands the next door to hell, *Prov. vii. 27. Her house is the way to hell.* What pains do others take in persecuting! Hofiness is the white they shoot at. 'Tis said of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, he undertook more tedious journeys, and went upon greater hazards, to vex and oppose the *Jews*, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. The devil blows the horn, and men ride post to hell, as if they feared hell would be full ere they would get thither. When *Satan* had entered into *Judas*, how active was *Judas*! he goes to the high priests, from them to the band of soldiers, and from them back again to the garden, and never left till he had betrayed Christ. How industrious were the idolatrous *Jews*! so fiercely were they bent upon their sin, that they would sacrifice their sons and daughters to their idol-gods, *Jer. xxxii. 35.* Do men take all this pains for hell, and shall not we take pains for the kingdom of heaven? The wicked have nothing to encourage them in their sins, they have all the threatnings of God as a flaming sword against them. O let it never be said, that the devil's servants are more active than Christ's; that they serve him better who rewards them only with fire and brimstone, than we do God, who rewards us with a kingdom.

21. The labour we take for heaven, is a labour full of pleasure, *Prov. iii. 17.* A man sweats at his recreation, tires himself with hunting, but there is a delight he takes in it, which sweetens it, *Rom. vii. 22. I delight in the law of God in the inner man, Gr. I take pleasure.* Not only is the kingdom of heaven delightful, but the way thither; what delight hath a gracious soul in prayer? *Isa. lvi. 7. I will make them*

*joyful in my house of prayer.* While a christian weeps, there is joy drops with tears; while he is musing on God, he hath such illapses of the spirit, and, as it were, such transfigurations of soul, that he thinks himself half in heaven, *Pf. lxiii. 5, 6. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, &c.* A christian's work for heaven is like a bridegroom's work on the morning of the marriage-day, he puts on his vesture and wedding-ropes, in which he shall be married to his bride; so, in all the duties of religion, we are putting on those wedding-ropes, in which we shall be married to Christ in glory. O what solace and inward peace is there in close walking with God! *Isa. xxxii. 17. The work of righteousness shall be peace.* Serving of God is like gathering of spices or flowers, wherein there is some labour, but the labour is recompensed with delight. Working for heaven is like digging in a gold mine; the digging is labour, but getting the gold is pleasure: O then let us bestir ourselves for the kingdom of heaven; it is a labour full of pleasure! A christian would not part with his joy for the most delicious music; he would not exchange his anchor of hope for a crown of gold. Well might *David* say, *In keeping thy precepts there is great reward, Pf. xix. 11.* not only after keeping thy precepts, but in keeping them: a christian hath both the spring-flowers and the crop; inward delight in serving God, there is the spring-flowers; and the kingdom of glory at last, there is the full crop.

22. How industrious have the saints in former ages been! They thought they could never do enough for heaven; they could never serve God enough, love him enough. *Minus te amavi, Domine, Aug. Lord, I have loved thee too little.* What pains did *St. Paul* take for the heavenly kingdom? *Phil. iii. 13. Reaching forth unto those things which are before.* The Greek word to reach forth, signifies to stretch out the neck; a metaphor from racers, who strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. *Anna* the prophetess, *Luke ii. 37. departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* *Basil* the great, by much labour and watching, exhausted his bodily strength. *Let racks, pullies, and all torments come upon me* (said *Ignatius*) *so I may win Christ.* The industry and courage of former saints, who are now crowned with glory,



should provoke our diligence, that so at last we may sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven.

23. The more pains we take for heaven, the more welcome will death be to us: what is it makes men so loth to die? They are like a tenant that will not go out of the house till the serjeant pull him out; they love not to hear of death; why so? Because their conscience accuseth them that they have taken little or no pains for heaven; they have been sleeping when they should have been working, and now they are afraid lest death should carry them prisoners to hell: whereas he who hath spent his time in serving of God, he can look death in the face with comfort; he was wholly taken up about heaven, and now he shall be taken up to heaven; he traded before in heaven, and now he shall go to live there, *Phil. i. 22. Cupio dissolvi, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* Paul had wholly laid out himself for God, *1 Cor. xv. 30.* and now he knew there was a crown laid up for him, and he longed to take possession. Thus I have given you twenty three persuasives or arguments to exert and put forth your utmost diligence for the obtaining the kingdom of heaven; O that these arguments were written in all your hearts, as with the point of a diamond! And, because delays in these cases are dangerous, let me desire you to set upon this work for heaven presently, *Pf. exix. 60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* Many people are convinced of the necessity of looking after the kingdom of glory, but they say as those, *Hag. i. 2. The time is not yet come.* They adjourn and put off till their time is slipped away, and so they lose the kingdom of heaven; beware of this fallacy: delay strengthens sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man, *1 Sam. xxi. 8. The king's business requires haste;* so the business of salvation requires haste: do not put off an hour longer, *volut ambiguis mobilis alis hora.* What assurance have you that you shall live another day? have you any lease of life granted? why then do you not presently arise out of the bed of sloth, and put forth all your strength and spirits that you may be possessed of the kingdom of glory; should not things of the highest importance be done first? Settling a man's estate, and clearing the title to his land, is not delayed, but done in the first place; what is there of such grand importance as this, the saving of your souls, and the gaining

of a kingdom? Therefore to-day hear God's voice, now mind eternity, now get your title to heaven cleared before the decree of death bring forth: what imprudence is it to lay the heaviest load upon the weakest horse? So to lay the heavy load of repentance on thyself, when thou art infeeble by sickness, the hands shake, the lips quiver, the heart faints; O be wise in time, now prepare for the kingdom. He who never begins his voyage to heaven but in the storm of death, it is a thousand to one if he doth not suffer an eternal shipwreck.

*Use VI. Of exhortation.*

1. *Branch.* If there be such a glorious kingdom a-coming, then you who have any good hope through grace, you that are the heirs of this kingdom, let me exhort you to six things:

1. Often take a prospect of this heavenly kingdom; climb up the celestial mount; take a turn, as it were, in heaven every day, by holy meditation, *Pf. xlviii. 12, 13. Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks.* See what a glorious kingdom heaven is; go tell the towers, view the palaces of the heavenly Jerusalem: christian, show thy heart the gates of pearl, the bed of spices, the clusters of grapes which grow in the paradise of God; say, O my soul, all this glory is thine, it is thy Father's good pleasure to give thee this kingdom. The thoughts of heaven are very delightful and ravishing; can men of the world so delight in viewing their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of promise take more delight in contemplating the celestial kingdom? The serious meditation of the kingdom of glory would work these three effects.

(1.) It would put a damp and slur upon all worldly glory: those who stand upon the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but small in their eye; could we look through the perspective glass of faith, and take a view of heaven's glory, how small and minute would all other things appear? Moses slighted the honours of Pharaoh's court, having an eye to the recompence of reward, *Heb. xi. 26.* St. Paul, who had a vision of glory, and St. John, who saw the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven, having the glory of God in it, *Rev. xxi. 11.* how did the world after appear in an eclipse to them?

(2.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would much promote holiness in us; heaven is an holy place, *1 Pet. i. 4. An inheritance undefiled;*

defiled; 'tis described by transparent glass, to denote its purity, *Rev. xxi. 21.* The contemplating heaven would put us upon the study of holiness, because none but such are admitted into that kingdom: heaven is not like *Noah's ark*, into which came clean beasts and unclean; only the pure in heart shall see God, *Matth. v. 8.*

(3.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would be a spur to diligence, *Immensum gloria calcar habet, 1 Cor. xv. 58.* Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. When the mariner sees the haven, he plies it harder with his oars; when we have a sight and prospect of glory, it would make us be much in prayer, alms, watching; it would add wings to duty, and make the lamp of our devotion burn brighter.

2. If you have hopes of this kingdom, be content tho' you have but a little of the world: contentment is a rare thing, 'tis a jewel that but few christians wear; but if you have a grounded hope of heaven, it may work your heart to contentation. What, tho' you have but little in possession? you have a kingdom in reversion. Were you to take an estimate of a man's estate, how would you value it? by what he hath in his house, or by his land? Perhaps he hath little money or jewels in his house, but he is a landed man, there lies his estate. A believer hath but little oil in the cruise, and meal in the barrel, but he is a landed man, he hath a title to a kingdom, and may not this satisfy him? If a man, who lived here in *England*, had a great estate befallen him beyond seas, and perhaps had no more money at present but just to pay for his voyage, he is content, he knows when he comes to his estate, he shall have money enough: thou who art a believer, hast a kingdom befallen thee; tho' thou hast but little in thy purse, yet, if thou hast enough to pay for thy voyage, enough to bear thy charges to heaven, it is sufficient. God hath given thee grace, which is the fore-crop, and will give thee glory, which is the after-crop; and may not this make thee content?

3. *Branch.* If you have hope of this blessed kingdom, pray often for the coming of this glorious kingdom, *Thy kingdom come*: only believers can pray heartily for the hastening of the kingdom of glory.

1. They cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who never had the king-

dom of grace set up in their hearts: can the guilty prisoner pray, that the assizes may come?

2. They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who are lovers of the world; they have found paradise, they are in their kingdom already, this is their heaven, and they desire to hear of no other: they are of his mind, who said, if he might keep his cardinalship in *Paris*, he would lose his part in paradise.

3. They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who oppose Christ's kingdom of grace, who break his laws, which are the sceptre of his kingdom, who shoot at those who bear Christ's name, and carry his colours: sure these cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, for then Christ will judge them; and, if they say this prayer, they are hypocrites, they mean not as they speak. But you who have the kingdom of grace set up in your hearts, pray much that the kingdom of glory may hasten, *Thy kingdom come*; when this kingdom comes, then you shall behold Christ in all his embroidered robes of glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun in all its meridian splendor. When Christ's kingdom comes, the bodies of the saints that sleep in the dust shall be raised in honour, and made like Christ's glorious body; then shall your souls, like diamonds, sparkle with holiness; you shall never have a sinful thought more, you shall be as holy as the angels, you shall be as holy as you would be, and as holy as God would have you to be; then you shall be in a better state than in innocency. Adam was created a glorious creature, but mutable; a bright star, but a falling star: but in the kingdom of heaven is a fixation of happiness: when Christ's kingdom of glory comes, you shall be rid of all your enemies: as *Moses* said, *Exod. xiv. 13.* The Egyptians, whom you have seen to-day, you shall see them no more for ever. So those enemies who have plowed on the backs of God's people, and made deep their furrows, when Christ shall come in his glory, you shall see these enemies no more. All Christ's enemies shall be put under his feet, *2 Cor. xv. 25.* and before the wicked be destroyed, the saints shall judge them, *1 Cor. vi. 2.* Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? This will cut the wicked to the heart, that those whom they have formerly scorned and scourged, shall sit as judges upon them, and vote with Christ in his judicial proceedings: O then well may you pray for the hastening



hastening of the kingdom of glory, *Thy kingdom come.*

4th. Branch. If you have any good hope of this blessed kingdom, let this make the colour come in your faces, be of sanguine cheerful temper; have you a title to a kingdom, and sad? *Rom. v. 2. We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God.* Christians, the trumpet is ready to sound, an eternal jubilee is at hand, when a freedom from sin shall be proclaimed: your coronation-day is a-coming; it is but putting off your cloths, and laying your head upon a pillow of dust, and you shall be enthroned in a kingdom, and invested with the embroidered robes of glory: doth not all this call for a cheerful spirit? Cheerfulness adorns religion; it is a temper of soul Christ loves, *John xiv. 28. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce.* It makes many suspect heaven is not so pleasant, when they see those that walk thither so sad. How doth the heir rejoyce, in hope of the inheritance? Who should rejoyce, if not a believer, who is heir of the kingdom, and such a kingdom as *eye hath not seen*? When the flesh begins to droop, let faith lift up its head, and cause an holy jubilation and rejoycing in the soul.

5. Let the saints long to be in this blessed kingdom. A prince that travels in foreign parts, doth he not long to be in his own nation, that he may be crowned? The bride desires the marriage-day, *Rev. xxii. 27. The spirit and the bride say come: even so, come, Lord Jesus.* Sure our unwillingness to go hence, shows either the weakness of our faith in the belief of the heavenly kingdom; or the strength of our doubtings, whether we have an interest in it. Were our title to heaven more cleared, we should need patience to be content to stay here any longer.

Again, our unwillingness to go hence declares, we love the world too much, and Christ too little. Love (as *Aristotle* saith) desires union; did we love Christ as we should, we would desire to be united to him in glory, when we might take our fill of love. Be humbled that we are so unwilling to go hence: let us labour to arrive at that divine temper of soul as *Paul* had, *Cupio dissolvi, I desire to depart and be with Christ*, *Phil. i. 23.* We are compassed with a body of sin; should not we long to shake off this viper? We are in *Mesech*, and the tents of *Kedar*, in a place where we see God dishonoured; should not we desire to have our

pass to be gone? We are in a valley of tears, is it not better being in a kingdom? Here we are combating with Satan; should not we desire to be called out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, that we may receive a victorious crown? O ye saints, breathe after the heavenly kingdom. Though we should be willing to stay to do service, yet we should ambitiously desire to be always sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Think what it will be to be ever with the Lord: are there any sweeter smiles or embraces than this? Is there any bed so soft as Christ's bosom? Is there any such joy as to have the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over us? Is there any such honour as to sit upon the throne with Christ? *Rev. iii. 21.* O then long for the celestial kingdom.

6. Wait for this kingdom of glory. It is not incongruous or improper to long for heaven, yet wait for it; long for it because it is a kingdom, yet wait your Father's good pleasure: God could presently bestow this kingdom, but he sees it good that we should wait a while.

(1.) Had we the kingdom of heaven presently affoon as ever grace is infused, then God would lose much of his glory. (1.) Where would be our living by faith, which is the grace that brings in the chief revenues of glory to God? *Rom. v. 20.* (2.) Where would be our suffering for God, which is a way of honouring him, which the angels in heaven are not capable of. (3.) Where would be the active service we are to do for God? Would we have God give us a kingdom, and we do nothing for him before we come there? Would we have rest before labour, a crown before victory? This were disingenuous. *Paul* was content to stay out of heaven a while, that he might be a means to bring others thither, *Phil. i. 23.*

(2.) While we wait for the kingdom, our glory is increasing. Every duty, religiously performed, adds a jewel to our crown. Do we desire to have our robes of glory shine brighter? Let us wait and work; the longer we stay for the principal, the greater will the interest be. The husbandman waits till the seed spring up: wait for the harvest of glory, some have their waiting weeks at court; this is our waiting time: Christ saith, *pray, and faint not*, *Luke xviii. 1.* So wait, and faint not. Be not weary, the kingdom of heaven will make amends for your waiting: *I have waited*

*waited for thy salvation, O Lord, said that dying patriarch, Gen. xlix. 18.*

*Use v. Comfort to the people of God.*

(1.) In all their sufferings. The true saint is, as Luther saith, *hæres crucis*, heir to the cross: affliction is his diet-drink, but here is that may be as bezoar-stone to keep him from fainting, these sufferings bring a kingdom. The hope of the kingdom of heaven, saith Basil, should indulcerate and sweeten all our troubles, 2 Tim. ii. 12. *If we suffer, we shall reign with him*: 'tis but a short fight, but an eternal triumph: this light suffering produceth an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1. *A weight of glory*. Things which are precious, the more weighty, the more they are worth, the more weight is in a crown of gold, the more it is worth. 'Tis a weight of glory. 2. *An eternal weight of glory*. Did this glory last for a while, it would much abate and imbitter the joys of heaven: but the glory of that kingdom runs parallel with eternity; God will be as a deep sea of blessedness, and the glorified saints shall for ever bathe themselves in that ocean. One day's wearing the crown, will abundantly pay for all the saints sufferings; how much more then when *they shall reign for ever and ever*? Rev. xxii. 5. O let this support under all the calamities and sufferings in this life: what a vast difference is there between a believer's sufferings and his reward, Rom. viii. 18. *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*. For a few tears, rivers of pleasure; for mourning, white robes. This made the primitive christians laugh at imprisonments, and snatch up torments as so many crowns: though now we drink in a wormwood-cup, here is sugar in

the bottom to sweeten it, *It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom*.

2. Comfort in death: here is that which may take away from God's children the terror of death, they are now entering into the kingdom. Indeed no wonder if wicked men be appalled and terrified at the approach of death, they die unpardoned. Death carries them to the goal, where they must ly for ever without bail or mainprize: but why should any of God's children be so scared and half-dead with the thoughts of death? what hurt doth death to them, but lead them to a glorious kingdom? Faith gives a title to heaven, death a possession; let this be a gospel-antidote to expel the fear of death. Hilarion, that blessed man, cried out, *Egredere, anima, egredere, quid times?* Go forth, my soul, go forth, what fearest thou? Let them fear death, who do not fear sin: but let not God's children be over-much troubled at the grim face of that messenger, which brings them to the end of their sorrow, and the beginning of their joy. Death is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 22. it is a part of the believer's inventory. Is a prince afraid to cross a narrow sea, who shall be crowned when he comes to shore? Death to the saints shall be an usher to bring them into the presence of the king of glory: this puts lilies and roses into the ghastly face of death, and makes it look amiable. Death brings us to a crown of glory which fades not away: the day of death is better to a believer, than the day of his birth; death is *aditus ad gloriam*, an entrance into a blessed eternity. Fear not death, but rather let your hearts revive when you think these rattling wheels of death's chariot are but to carry you home to an everlasting kingdom.

## OF THE THIRD PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 10. *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.*

WE come next to the third petition, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*. This petition consists of two parts.

I. The matter, *Doing of God's will*.

II. The manner, *As it is in heaven*.

I. The matter of this petition is, *The doing of God's will. Thy will be done*.

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the will of God?*

Ans. There is a twofold will. (1.) *Voluntas decreti*, God's secret will, or the will of his decree; we pray not that God's secret will may be done by us. This secret will cannot be known, it is locked up in God's own breast, and neither man nor angel hath key to open it.

(2.) *Vol-*



(2.) *Voluntas revelata*, God's revealed will. This revealed will is written in the book of scripture, the scripture is a declaration of God's will, it discovers what he would have us do in order to our salvation.

Qu. 2. *What do we pray for in these words, Thy will be done?*

Ans. We pray for two things; 1. For active obedience; that we may do God's will actively in what he commands. 2. For passive; that we may submit to God's will patiently in what he inflicts. We pray, that we may do God's will actively, subscribe to all his commands, believe in Jesus, the cardinal-grace, lead holy lives. So *Austin* upon the petition, *Nobis a Deo precamur obedientiam*; we pray that we may actively obey God's will. This is the sum of all religion, the two tables epitomized, *the doing of God's will: thy will be done*. We must know God's will before we can do it: knowledge is the eye which must direct the foot of obedience. At *Athens* there was an altar set up, *To the unknown God*, Acts xvii. 23. It is as bad to offer the blind to God as the dead. Knowledge is the pillar of fire to give light to practice; but tho' knowledge is requisite, yet the knowledge of God's will is not enough without doing his will: *thy will be done*. If one had a system of divinity in his head; if he had all knowledge, 1 Cor. xii. 2. yet, if obedience were wanting, his knowledge were lame, and would not carry him to heaven. Knowing God's will may make a man admired, but 'tis doing God's will makes him blessed: knowing God's will without doing it, will not crown us with happiness.

1. The bare knowledge of God's will is inefficacious, it doth not better the heart. Knowledge alone is like a winter-sun, which hath no heat or influence; it doth not warm the affections, or purify the conscience. *Judas* was a great luminary, he knew God's will, but he was a traitor.

2. Knowing without doing God's will, will make one's case worse; 'twill heat hell the hotter, Luke xii. 47. *The servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes*. Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell. Thou who hast knowledge of God's will, but dost not do it, wherein dost thou excel an hypocrite? nay, wherein dost thou excel the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light? 'Tis improper to call such christians, who are knowers of God's will, but not doers

of it. 'Tis improper to call him a tradesman who never wrought in his trade; so to call him a christian, who never wrought in the trade of religion. Let us not rest in the knowing of God's will. Let it not be said of us, as *Plutarch* speaks of the *Grecians*, *They knew what was just, but did it not*. Let us set upon this, the doing of God's will, *Thy will be done*.

Qu. 3. *Why is the doing of God's will so requisite?*

Ans. 1. Out of equity. God may justly claim a right to our obedience: he is our founder, and we have our being from him; and 'tis but equal that we should do his will, at whose word we were created. God is our benefactor, 'tis just that, if God give us our allowance, we should give him our allegiance.

2. The great design of God in the word is, to make us doers of his will. 1st. All God's royal edicts and precepts are to bring us to this, to be doers of his will; what needed God been at the pains to give us the copy of his law, and write it out with his own finger else? The word of God is not only a rule of knowledge, but of duty, Deut. xiii. 4. and xxvi. 6. *This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes, thou shalt therefore keep and do them*. If you tell your children what is your mind, it is not only that they may know your will, but do it. God gives us his word, as a master gives a scholar a copy, to write after it; he gives it as his will and testament, that we should be the executors to see it performed. 2dly. This is the end of all God's promises, to draw us to God's will; the promises are loadstones to obedience, Deut. xi. 27. *A blessing if ye obey*; as a father gives his son money to bribe him to obedience, Deut. xxviii. 1. *If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth; blessed shalt thou be in the city and in the field*. The promises are a royal charter settled upon obedience. 3dly. The minatory part of the word, the threatnings of God, stand as the angel with a flaming sword to deter us from sin, and make us doers of God's will, Deut. xi. 28. *A curse if ye will not obey*. Ps. lxxviii. 21. *God shall wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on still in his trespasses*. These threatnings do often take hold of men in this life; they are made examples, and hung up in chains to scare others from disobedience. 4ly. All God's providences are to make us doers of his will.

will. As God makes use of all the seasons of the year for harvest, so all his various providences are to bring on the harvest of obedience.

1. Afflictions are to make us do God's will, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. *When Manasseh was in affliction, he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly.* The rod hath this voice, *be doers of God's will.* Affliction is called a furnace, *Isa. xxxvii. 19. The furnace melts the metal, and then it is cast into a new mould.* God's furnace is to melt us and mould us into obedience.

2. God's mercies are to make us do his will, Rom. xii. 1. *I beseech you by the merits of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.* Body is by a synecdoche put for the whole man; if the soul should not be presented to God as well as the body, it could not be reasonable service; now, saith the apostle, *I beseech you by the mercies of God present yourselves a living sacrifice.* Mercies are the strongest obligations to duty, *Hos. xi. 4. I draw them with the cords of a man;* that is, with golden cords of mercy. In a word, all that is written in the law or gospel tends to this that we shall be doers of God's will, *Thy will be done.*

3. By doing the will of God, we evidence sincerity. As Christ said in another sense, *John x. 25. The works which I do, bear witness of me:* So, it is not all our golden words, if we could speak like angels, but our works, our doing of God's will, which bears his witness of our sincerity. We judge not of the health of a man's body by his high colours, but by the pulse of the arm, where the blood chiefly stirs; so a Christian's fondness is not to be judged by his profession; what is this high colour? but the estimate of a Christian is to be taken by his obediential acting, his doing the will of God; this is the best certificate, and letters testimonial to shew for heaven.

4. Doing God's will much propagates the gospel; this is the diamond that sparkles in religion. Others cannot see what faith is in the heart; but when they see we do God's will on earth, this makes them have a venerable opinion of religion, and become proselytes to it. *Julian*, in one of his epistles, writing to *Arfatius*, saith, *that the Christian religion did much flourish, by the sanctity and obedience of them that professed it.*

5. By doing God's will, we show our love to Christ, *John xiv. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* What greater love to Christ, than to do

his will, though it cross our own? Every one would be thought to love Christ; but, how shall that be known but by this? Do you do his will on earth? *Neque principem veneramus, si odio ejus leges habemus, Iſid.* It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves Christ's person, when he slights his commands. Not to do God's will on earth, is a great evil. It is, (1.) Sinful. (2.) Foolish. (3.) Dangerous.

(1.) It is sinful. (1.) We go against our prayers; we pray, *fiat voluntas tua*, thy will be done, and yet we do not obey his will; we confute our own prayer. (2.) We go against our vow in baptism; we have vowed to fight under the Lord's banner, to obey his sceptre, and this vow we have often renewed in the Lord's supper: if we do not God's will on earth, we are foresworn, and God will indict us of perjury.

(2.) Not to do God's will on earth, is foolish; (1.) Because there is no standing it out against God. If we do not obey him, we cannot resist him, 1 Cor. x. 22. *Are we stronger than he?* Job xl. 9. *Hast thou an arm like God? Canst thou measure arms with him?* To oppose God, is, as if a child should fight with an archangel; as if an heap of briars should put themselves into a battalia against the flame. (2.) Not to do God's will: is foolish; because, if we do not God's will, we do the devil's will. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? To do his will that seeks our ruin?

Qu. *But, are any so wicked as to do the devil's will?*

Ans. Yes; *John viii. 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father you will do.* When a man tells a lie, doth he not do the devil's will? *Acts v. 3 Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?*

(3.) Not to do God's will is dangerous; it brings a spiritual *premunire*. If God's will be not done by us; he will have his will upon us; if we obey not God's will in commanding, we shall obey his will in punishing, 2 Thess. i. 7. *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty angels in flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not his gospel.* Either we must do God's will, or suffer it.

6. Whatever God wills us to do, is for our benefit: behold here self-interest. As if a king commands his subject to dig in a mine of gold, and then gives him all the gold he hath digged: God bids us do his will, and this is for our



good, *Deut. x. 13. And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and keep the commandments of the Lord, which I command thee this day for thy good?* It is God's will we should repent, and this is for our good, repentance ushers in remission, *Acts iii. 9. Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.* It is God's will that we should believe; and why is it, but that we should be crowned with salvation? *Mark xvi. 16. He that believes shall be saved.* What God wills is not so much our duty, as our privilege; he bids us obey his voice, and it is greatly for our good, *Jer. vii. 23. Obey my voice, and I will be your God.* I will not only give you my angels to be your guard, but myself to be your portion; my spirit shall be yours to sanctify you, my love shall be yours to comfort you, my mercy shall be yours to save you. *I will be your God.*

7. To do God's will, is our honour. A person thinks it an honour to have a king speak to him to do such a thing: the angels count it their highest honour in heaven to do God's will; *servire Deo regnare est*, to serve God, is to reign. *Non onerant nos, sed ornant*, *Salvian.* How cheerfully did the rowers row the barge that carried *Cesar*! to be employed in his barge was an honour: to be employed in doing God's will is *insigne honoris*, the highest ensign of honour that a mortal creature is capable of. Christ's precepts do not burden us, but adorn us.

8. To do God's will on earth, makes us like Christ, and a-kin to Christ. (1.) It makes us like Christ: is it not our prayer that we may be like Christ? Jesus Christ did his father's will, *John vi. 38. I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* God the father and Christ, as they have but one essence, so but one will; Christ's will was melted into his father's, *John iv. 34. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.* By our doing God's will on earth, we resemble Christ, nay, we are a-kin to Christ, and are of the blood-royal of heaven. *Alexander* called himself cousin to the gods; what honour is it to be a-kin to Christ! *Mat. xii. 50. Whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* Did king *Solomon* arise off his throne to meet his mother, and set her on a throne by him? *1 Kings iii. 19.* such honour will Christ bestow on such as are doers of God's will, he will salute them as

his kindred, and set them on a glorious throne in the amphitheatre of heaven.

9. Doing God's will on earth brings peace in life and death. (1.) In life, *Pf. xix. 11. In keeping thy precepts there is great reward*, not only after keeping them, but in keeping them; when we walk closely with God in obedience, there is a secret joy let into the soul, and how swiftly and cheerfully do the wheels of the soul move when they are oiled with the oil of gladness? (2.) Peace in death. When *Heczekiah* thought he was about to die, what gave him comfort? This, that he had done the will of God, *Isa. xxxviii. 3. Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee; how I have walked before thee in truth, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* It was *Augustus's* wish, that he might have an easy death, without much pain. If any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, *we have endeavoured to do God's will on earth.* Did you ever hear any cry out on their death-bed, that they have done God's will too much? No; hath it not been, that they have done his will no more, that they come so short in their obedience? Doing God's will, will be both your comfort and your crown.

10. If we are not doers of God's will, we shall be looked upon as contemners of God's will: let God say what he will, yet men will go on in sin; this is to contemn God, *Pf. x. 13. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God?* To contemn God is worse than to rebel. The tribes of *Israel* rebelled against *Rehoboam*, because he made their yoke heavier, *1 Kings xii. 16.* But to contemn God is worse, it is to slight him; to contemn God is to put a scorn upon him, and affront him to his face; and an affront will make God draw his sword. Thus I have answered that question, why doing God's will on earth is so requisite? It is necessary as salvation.

4. Qu. *In what manner are we to do God's will that we may find acceptance?*

The manner of doing God's will is the chief thing. The schoolmen say well. *Modus rei cadit sub praecepto*, "the manner of a thing is as well required as the thing itself." If a man build an house, if he doth not it according to the mind of the owner, he likes it not, but thinks all his charges lost; so if we do not God's will in the right manner, it is not accepted; we must not only do what God appoints, but as God appoints: here lies the very life-blood of religion. So I come to answer this great question, *In what manner*

manner are we to do God's will, that we may find acceptance?

*Ans.* We do God's will acceptably, when we do duties spiritually, *Phil. iii. 3. We worship God in the spirit.* To serve God spiritually, is to do duties *ab interno principio*, from an inward principle: the Pharisees were vexed about the external part of God's worship; how zealous were they in the outward observation of the sabbath, charging Christ with the breach of it? But all this was but outward obedience, there was nothing of spirituality in it: then we do God's will acceptably, when we serve him from a renewed principle of grace. A crab-tree may bear as well as a pear-main, but it is not so good fruit as the other, because it doth not come from so sweet a root: an unregenerate person may do as much external obedience as a child of God, he may pray as much, hear as much, but his obedience is harsh and sowre, because it doth not come from the sweet and pleasant root of grace; the inward principle of obedience is faith, therefore it is called the obedience of faith, *Rom. xvi. 26. But why must this silver threed of faith run through the whole work of obedience?*

*Ans.* Because faith looks at Christ in every duty, it toucheth the hem of his garment; and through Christ, both the person and the offering are accepted, *Eph. i. 6.*

2. We do God's will acceptably, when we prefer his will before all other; if God wills one thing, and man wills the contrary, we do not obey man's will, but rather God's, *Acts iv. 19. Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* God saith, *thou shalt not make a graven image;* king *Nebuchadnezzar* set up a golden image to be worshipped; but the three children, or rather champions, resolve God's will shall take place, and they would obey him, though with the loss of their lives, *Dan. iii. 18. Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

3. We do God's will acceptably, when we do God's will as it is done in heaven, that is, as the angels do it: to do God's will as the angels, *similitudinem notat, non æqualitatem*, *Brugensis*; denotes this much, that we are to resemble them, and make them our pattern. Though we cannot equal the angels in doing God's will, yet we must imitate them; a child

cannot write so well as the scrivener, yet he imitates the copy. In particular,

1. We do God's will as the angels do it in heaven, when we do God's will regularly, *sine deflexu*, we go according to the divine institutions, not decrees of counsels, or traditions: this is to do God's will as the angels; they do it regularly, they do nothing but what is commanded; angels are not for ceremonies: as there are statute-laws in the land which bind, so the scripture is God's statute-law, which we must exactly observe. The watch is set by the dial; then our obedience is right, when it goes by the sun-dial of the word. If obedience hath not the word for its rule, it is not doing God's will, but our own; it is will-worship, *Deut. xii. 32.* The Lord would have *Moses* make the tabernacle according to the pattern, *Exod. xxv. 40.* If *Moses* had left out any thing in the pattern, or added any thing to it, it would have been very provoking; to mix any thing of our own devising in God's worship, is to go beside, yea, contrary to the pattern; God's worship is the apple of his eye, that which he is most tender of; and there is nothing he hath more shewed his displeasure against, than the corrupting his worship. How severely did God punish *Nadab* and *Abihu* for offering up strange fire? *Lev. x. 2.* that is, such fire as God had not sanctified on the altar; whatever is not divinely appointed, is offering up *strange fire*. There is in many, a strange itch after superstition; they love a gaudy religion, are more for the pomp of worship than the purity: this cannot be pleasing to God; for, as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served, man will be so bold as to prescribe him. To thrust human inventions into sacred things, is a doing our own will, not God's; and he will say, *quis quæsit hoc?* Who hath required this at your hand; *Isa. i. 12.* Then we do God's will as it is done in heaven, when we do it regularly, we reverence God's institutions, and the mode of worship, which hath the stamp of divine authority upon it.

2. We do God's will as it is done by the angels in heaven, when we do it intirely, *sine mutilatione*, we do all God's will. The angels in heaven do all that God commands, they leave nothing of his will undone, *Pf. cxxx. 20. Ye his angels that do his commandments.* If God send an angel to the virgin *Mary*, he goes on God's errand; if he gives his



angels a charge to minister for the saints they obey, *Heb. i. 14.* It cannot stand with angelical obedience, to leave the least *iota* of God's will unfulfilled: this is to do God's will as the angels, when we do all his will, *quicquid propter Deum fit, æqualiter fit.* This was God's charge to *Israel*, *Numb. xv. 40.* Remember to do all my commandments. And it was spoken of *David*, *Acts xiii. 22.* I have found *David*, a man after mine own heart, who shall perform all my will, *Gr. all my wills.* Every command hath the same authority; and if we do God's will uprightly, we do it uniformly, we obey every part and branch of his will, we join first and second table. Surely we owe that to God our father, which, the papists say, we owe to our mother the church, unlimited obedience; we must incline to every command, as the needle moves that way which the loadstone draws.

(2.) This discovers the unsoundness of many, who do God's will by halves, they pick and choose in religion, they in some things comply with God's will, but not in others; like a scoured horse, who sets but some of his feet on the ground, he favours one foot. He who is to play upon a lute, must strike upon every string, or he spoils all the music. God's commandments may be compared to a ten-stringed lute, we must obey God's will in every command, strike upon every string, or we can make no good melody in religion. The badger hath one foot shorter than the other; hypocrites are shorter in some duties than others; some will pray, not give alms; hear the word, not forgive their enemies; receive the sacrament, not make restitution: how can they be holy, who are not just? Hypocrites profess fair, but when it comes to sacrificing the *Ishac*, crucifying the beloved son, or parting with some of their estate for Christ, here they stick, and say as *Naaman*, *2 Kings v. 18.* In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant. This is far from doing God's will as the angels do; God likes not such as do his will by halves: if your servant should do some of your work, which you set him about, but not all; how would you like that?

Obj. But who is able to do all God's will?

Ans. Tho' we cannot do all God's will legally, yet we may evangelically; which is;

(1.) When we mourn that we can do God's will no better; when we fail, we weep, *Rom. vii. 24.*

(2.) When it is the desire of our soul to do

God's whole will, *Pf. cxix. 5.* O that my ways were directed to keep thy precepts. What a child of God wants in strength, he makes up in desire, in *magnis voluisse sat est.*

(3.) When we endeavour quoad conatum to do the whole will of God. A father bids his child lift such a burthen, the child is not able to lift it, but he tries, and does his endeavour to lift it; the father accepts of it, as if he had done it: this is to do God's will evangelically, and God is pleased to take it in good part; though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it sincerely, *sine furore.* To do God's will sincerely, lies in two things,

1. To do it out of a pure respect to God's command.

2. With a pure eye to God's glory.

1. To do God's will out of a pure respect to God's command. *Abraham's* sacrificing *Ishac* was contrary to flesh and blood; to sacrifice the son of his love, the son of the promise, and that no other hand but the father's own should do this, here was hard service: but, because God commanded it, out of pure respect to the command, *Abraham* obeyed: this is to do God's will aright, when tho' we feel no present joy or comfort in duty, yet, because God commands, we obey; not comfort, but the command is the ground of duty: thus the angels do God's will in heaven; God's command is the weight sets the wheels of their obedience a-going.

2. To do God's will sincerely, is to do it with a pure eye to God's glory. The pharisees did the will of God in giving alms; but that which was a dead fly in the ointment, was, that they did not aim at God's glory, but vain glory; they blew a trumpet. *Jehu* did the will of God in destroying the *Baal*-worshippers, and God commended him for doing it; but because he aimed more at settling himself in the kingdom, than at the glory of God, therefore God lookt upon it no better than murder, and said he would avenge the blood of *Jezreel* upon the house of *Jehu*, *Hos. ii. 4.* Let us look to our ends in obedience; tho' we shoot short, let us take a right aim: one may do God's will, yet not with a perfect heart, *2 Chron. xxv. 2.* *Amaziah* did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart. The action was right for the matter, but his aim was not right: that action which wants a good aim, wants a good

good issue; he doth God's will rightly, that doth it uprightly, his end is to honour God, and lift up his name in the world. A gracious soul makes God his centre. As *Joab*, when he had taken *Rabbah*, sent for king *David*, that he might carry away the glory of the victory, 2 *Sam.* xii. 27. So when a gracious soul hath done any duty, he desires that the glory of all may be given to God, 1 *Pet.* iv. 11. *That in all things God may be glorified.* This is to do God's will as the angels, when we not only advance God's glory, but design his glory: the angels are said to cast their crowns before the throne, *Rev.* iv. 10. Crowns are signs of greatest honour, but these crowns the angels lay at the Lord's feet, to show that they ascribe the glory of all they do to him.

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it willingly, *sine murmuracione*. The angels love to be employed in God's service; 'tis the angels heaven to serve God: they willingly descend from heaven to earth, when they bring messages from God, and glad tidings to the church; now, heaven being a place of such joy, the angels would not leave it a minute of an hour, only that they take such infinite delight in doing God's will. We do resemble the angels, when we do God's will willingly, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 9. *And thou Solomon, my son, serve the Lord with a willing mind.* God's people are called a willing people, *Pf.* cx. 3. *Heb.* a people of willingnesses; they give God a free-will-offering; tho' they cannot serve him perfectly, they serve him willingly: a hypocrite, tho' he doth *facere bonum*, yet not *velle*, he hath no delight in duty; he doth it rather out of fear of hell, than love to God; when he doth God's will, yet it is against his will, *Virtus nolentium nulla est.* *Cain* brought his sacrifice, but grudgingly; his worship was rather a task than an offering, rather penance than a sacrifice; he did God's will, but against his will; we must be carried upon the wings of delight in every duty. *Israel* were to blow the trumpets when they offered burnt-offerings, *Numb.* x. 10. Blowing the trumpets was to show their joy and cheerfulness in serving God; we must read and hear the word with delight, *Jer.* xv. 15. *Thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.* A pious soul goes to the word as to a feast, or as one would go with delight to hear music. *Sleidan* reports, that the protestants in France had a church they called *paradise*, because, when

they were in the house of God, they thought themselves in paradise: the saints flock as doves to the windows of God's house, *Iſa.* lx. 8. Who are these that flock as doves to the windows? Not a truly regenerate person is always in the same cheerful temper of obedience; he may sometimes find an indisposition and weariness of soul, but his weariness is his burden, he is weary of his weariness; he prays, weeps, useth all means to regain that alacrity and freedom in God's service that he was wont to have: this is to do God's will acceptably, when we do it willingly; 'tis this crowns all our services; delight in duty is better than duty. The musician is not commended for playing long, but well; 'tis not how much we do, but how much we love, *Pf.* cxix. 97. *O how love I thy law!* Love is as musk among linen, that perfumes it; love perfumes obedience, and makes it go up to heaven as incense. This is doing God's will as the angels in heaven do it; they are ravished with delight while they are praising God, therefore the angels are said to have harps in their hands, *Rev.* xv. 2. as a sign of their cheerfulness in God's service.

4. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do God's will fervently, *sine remissione*, *Rom.* xii. 11. *Fervent in spirit, serving God:* a metaphor from water when it seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in zeal and fervency: the angels serve God with fervour and intenseness; the angels are called seraphims, from an *Hebrew* word which signifies to burn, to show how the angels are all on fire, *Pf.* civ. 4. they burn in love and zeal in doing God's will; grace turns a saint into a seraphim; *Aaron* must put burning coals to the incense, *Exod.* xvi. 12. Incense was a type of prayer, burning coals of zeal, to show that the fire of zeal must be put to the incense of prayer. Formality starves duty; when we serve God dully and coldly, is this like the angels? Duty without fervency is as a sacrifice without fire; we should ascend to heaven in a fiery chariot of devotion.

5. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we give God the best in every service, *Numb.* xviii. 29. *Out of all your gifts, ye shall offer of all the best thereof.* *Numb.* xxviii. 7. *In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.* The Jews might not offer to the Lord wine that was small or mixed, but the strong wine, to imply, that we must offer to God the best,



the strongest of our affections: if the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that, *Cant. viii. 2. I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.* Thus the angels in heaven do God's will, they serve him in the best manner, they give him their seraphic high-strung praises: he who loves God, gives him the cream of his obedience. God challenged the fat of all the sacrifices as his due, *Lev. iii. 16.* Hypocrites care not what services they bring to God, they think to put him off with any thing, they put no cost in their duties, *Gen. iv. 3. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground.* The holy Ghost took notice of Abel's offering, that it was costly, *He brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, Gen. iv. 4.* But when he speaks of Cain's offering, he only saith, *He brought of the fruit of the ground.* Then we do God's will aright, when we do offer *pinguia*, we dedicate to him the best. *Domitian* would not have his image carved in wood or iron, but in gold. God will have the best we have, golden services.

6. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do it readily, and swiftly: the angels do not dispute or reason the case, but as soon as they have their charge and commission from God: they immediately obey; and, to show how ready they are to execute God's will, the cherubims, representing the angels, are described with wings, to show how swift and forward they are in their obedience, it is as if they had wings, *Dan. ix. 21. The man Gabriel (that was an angel) being caused to fly swiftly.* Thus should we do God's will as the angels; as soon as ever God speaks the word, we should be ambitious to obey: alas! how long is it sometimes ere we can get leave of our hearts to go to a duty? Christ went more readily *ad crucem* than we to the throne of grace; how many disputes and excuses have we? is this to do God's will as the angels in heaven do it? O let us shake off this backwardness to duty, as *Paul* shook off the viper, *Nescit tarda molimina spiritus sancti gratia; Zech. v. 9. I saw two women, and the wind was in their wings.* Wings are swift, but wind in the wings are great swiftness; such readiness should be in our obedience. As *Peter*, as soon as ever Christ commanded him to let down his net, at Christ's word he presently let down the net, and you know what success he had, *Luke v. 4.* It was prophesied of such as were brought home to Christ, *Pf. xviii. 44. As*

*soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.*

7. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do it constantly; the angels are never weary of doing God's will, they serve God day and night, *Rev. vii. 17.* thus must we imitate the angels, *Pf. cvi. 3. Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.* Constancy crowns obedience. *Non cepisse, sed persevere, virtutis est, Cypr.* Our obedience must be like the fire of the altar, which was continually kept burning, *Lev. vi. 13.* Hypocrites soon give over doing God's will; like the chrysolite which is of a golden colour, in the morning it is very bright to look on, but towards evening it grows dull; and hath lost its splendor. We should continue in doing God's will, because of that great loss that will befall us if we give over doing God's will.

(1.) A loss of honour, *Rev. iii. 11. That no man take thy crown;* implying, if the church of *Philadelphia* left off her obedience, she would lose her crown, *viz.* her honour and reputation. Apostacy creates infamy: *Judas* came from an apostle to be a traitor, it was a dishonour.

(2.) If we give over our obedience it is a loss of all that hath been already done; as if one should work in silver, and then pick out all the stitches. All a man's prayers are lost, all the sabbaths he hath kept are lost, he doth unravel all his good works, *Ezek. xviii. 24. All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.* He undoes all he hath done; as if one draw a curious picture with the pencil, and then come with his sponge and wipe out all again.

(3.) A loss of the soul and happiness: we were in a fair way for heaven, but, by leaving off doing God's will, we miss the excellent glory, and are plunged deeper in damnation, *2 Pet. ii. 21. It had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment.* Therefore let us continue in doing God's will; constancy sets the crown upon the head of obedience. Thus you see how we are to do God's will acceptably.

Use I. Branch 1. See hence our impotency, we have no innate power to do God's will: what need we pray, *thy will be done*, if we have power of ourselves to do it? I wonder free-willers pray this petition.

2 Branch. If we are to do God's will on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven, see then the folly of those who go by a wrong pattern; they do as the most of their neighbours do;

do; if they talk vain on the sabbath, they do but as their neighbours do; if now and then they swear an oath, it is the custom of their neighbours to do so, but we are to do God's will as the angels in heaven: do the angels do such things? We must make the angels our patterns, and not our neighbours: if our neighbours go to hell, shall we go thither too for company?

3. *Branch.* See here that which may make us long to be in heaven, then we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels do: alas, how defective are we in our obedience here! how far do we fall short? We cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting; our holy things are blemished, like the moon, which, when it shines brightest, hath a dark spot in it: but in heaven we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels in glory.

*Use II. Of reproof.*

1. *Branch.* It reproves such as do not God's will: they have the knowledge of God's will, (knowledge they count an ornament) but though they know God's will, yet they do it not.

(1.) They know what God would have them avoid: they know they should not swear, *Mat. v. 34. Swear not at all.* *Jer. xxiii. 10. For this sin the land mourns.* Yet though they pray, *hallowed be thy name*, they profane it by shooting oaths like chain-bullets against heaven: they know they should abstain from fornication and uncleanness, yet they cannot but bite at the devil's hook, if he bait it with flesh, *Jude 7.*

(2.) They know what God would have them practise, but they *leave undone those things which they ought to have done.* They know it is the will of God they should be true in their promise, just in their dealings, good in their relations; but they do not the will of God: they know they should read the scriptures, consult with God's oracle; but the Bible, like rusty armour, is hung up, and seldom used; they look oftener upon a pack of cards than a Bible: they know their houses should be *palestræ pietatis*, nurseries of piety, yet have no face of religion in them; they do not perfume their houses with prayer. What hypocrites are these to kneel down in the church, and lift up their eyes to heaven, and say, *thy will be done*, yet have no care at all to do God's will? What is this, but to hang out a flag of defiance against heaven, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

2. *Branch.* It reproves those who do not God's will in a right acceptable manner.

(1.) They do not God's will entirely, all God's will: they will obey God in some things, but not in others; as if a servant should do some of your work you set him about, but not the rest. *Jehu* destroyed the idolatry of *Baal*, but let the golden calves of *Jeroboam* stand, *2 Kings x. 30.* Some will observe the duties of the second table, but not the first. Others make an high profession, as if their tongues had been touched with a coal from God's altar, but live idly, and out of a calling; these the apostle complains of, *2 Thess. iii. 11. We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all.* Living by faith, and living in a calling, must go together: this is an evil thing, not to do all God's will.

(2.) They do not God's will ardently, they do not put coals to the incense; nor cheerfully, they bring their sacrifice, but not their heart: this is far from doing God's will as the angels; this loseth the reward: how can God like this, to serve him as if we served him not? How can God mind our duties, when we ourselves scarce mind them?

*Use III. Of examination.*

Let us examine all our actions, whether they are according to God's will. The will of God is the rule and standard, 'tis the sun-dial by which we must set all our actions: he is no good workman, that doth work by rule; he can be no good christian who goes not according to the rule of God's will. Let us examine our actions whether they do *quadrare*, agree to the will of God: are your speeches according to God's will? are our words savoury, being seasoned with grace? is our apparel according to God's will? *1 Tim. ii. 9. In like manner, that women adorn themselves with modest apparel:* not wanton and gayish to invite comers. Our diet, is it according to God's will? do we hold the bridle of temperance, and only take so much as may rather satisfy nature than surfeit it? Too much oil chokes the lamp. Is our whole carriage and behaviour according to God's will? are we patterns of prudence and piety? do we keep up the credit of religion, and shine as lights in the world? We pray *thy will be done* as it is in heaven; are we like our pattern? would the angels do this if they were on earth? would Jesus Christ do this? This is to christianize, this is to be saints of degrees, when we live our prayer,



prayer, and our actions are the counter-pane of God's will.

Use IV. Of exhortation.

Let us be doers of the will of God, *thy will be done.*

1. It is our wisdom to do God's will, *Deut. iv. 6. Keep and do these statutes, for this is your wisdom.*

2. It is our safety. Hath not misery always attended the doing of our own will, and happiness the doing of God's will?

(1.) Misery hath always attended the doing of our own will. Our first parents left God's will to fulfil their own, in *eating the forbidden fruit*; and what came of it? The apple had a bitter core in it, they purchased a curse for themselves and all their posterity. King Saul left God's will to do his own; he spares Agag, and the best of the sheep, and what was the issue, but the loss of his kingdom?

(2.) Happiness hath always attended the doing of God's will. Joseph obeyed God's will, in refusing the embraces of his mistress; and was not this his preferment? God's raised him to be the second man in the kingdom. Daniel did God's will contrary to the king's decree; he bowed his knee in prayer to God, and did not God make all Persia bow their knees to Daniel?

(3.) The way to have our will, is to do God's will. Would not we have a blessing in our estate? then let us do God's will, *Deut. xxviii. 1. 3. If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.* This is the way to have a good harvest. Would we have a blessing in our souls? then let us do God's will, *Jer. vii. 23. Obey my voice, and I will be your God; I will entail myself upon you as an everlasting portion; my grace shall be yours to sanctify you, my mercy shall be yours to save you. You see you lose nothing by doing God's will, this is the way to have your will; let God have his will in being obeyed, and you shall have your will in being saved.*

Qu. How shall we come to do God's will aright?

Ans. 1. Get sound knowledge; we must know God's will before we can do it: knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. The papists make ignorance the mother of devotion, but Christ makes ignorance the mother of error,

*Matth. xxii. 29. Ye err, not knowing the scripture.* We must know God's will before we can do it aright. Affection without knowledge, is like a horse full of metal, but his eyes are out.

2. If we would do God's will aright, let us labour for self-denial; unless we deny our own will, we shall never do God's will. God's will and ours are like the wind and tide when they are contrary; God wills one thing, we will another; God calls us to be crucified to the world; by nature we love the world; God calls us to forgive our enemies, by nature we bear malice in our hearts: God's will and ours are contrary, like the wind and tide; and till we can cross our own will, we shall never fulfil God's.

3. Let us get humble hearts: pride is the spring of disobedience, *Exod. v. 2. Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* A proud man thinks it below him to stoop to God's will. Be humble; the humble soul saith, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* He puts, as it were, a blank paper into God's hand; and bids him write what he will, he will subscribe to it.

4. Beg grace and strength of God to do his will, *Psa. cxlii. 10. Teach me to do thy will:* as if David had said, Lord, I need not be taught to do my own will, I can do it fast enough, but teach me to do thy will. And that which may add wings to prayer, is God's gracious promise, *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,* *Ezek. xxxvi. 27.* If the loadstone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move; if God's spirit enable, it will not be hard, but rather delightful to do God's will.

II. In this petition, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,* we pray, *That we may have grace to submit to God's will patiently in what he inflicts.* The text is to be understood as well of suffering God's will, as of doing it; so Maldonat, and the most judicious interpreters. I shall speak now of patient submission to God's will in whatever he inflicts, *thy will be done.* This should be the temper of a good christian, when he is under any disastrous providence, to lie quietly at God's feet, and say, *thy will be done.*

Qu. 1. What this patient submission to God's will is not?

Ans. There is something looks like patience which is not; namely, when a man bears a thing because he cannot help it; he takes affliction as his fate and destiny, therefore he endures

dures that quietly which he cannot avoid; this is rather necessity than patience.

Qu. 2. *What it is may stand with patient submission to God's will?*

Ans. 1. A Christian may be sensible of affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will, we ought not to be *Stoicks*, insensible and unconcerned with God's dealings; like the sons of *Deucalion*, who (as the poets say) were begotten of a stone. Christ was sensible when he swate great drops of blood, but there was submission to God's will, *Mat. xxvi. 39. Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.* We are bid to humble ourselves under God's hand, *1 Pet. v. 6.* which we cannot do, unless we are sensible of it.

2. A Christian may weep under an affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will, God allows tears; it is a sin to be *without natural affection*, *Rom. i. 31.* Grace makes the heart tender; *strangulat inclusus dolor*; weeping gives vent to sorrow, *expletur lacrymis dolor.* Joseph wept over his dead father; *Job*, when he had so much ill news brought him at once, rent his mantle, an expression of grief, but did not tear his hair in anger; only worldly grief must not be immoderate: a vein may bleed too much; the water riseth too high when it overflows the banks.

3. A Christian may complain in his affliction, yet be submissive to God's will, *Pf. cxlii. 2. I cried to the Lord with my voice, I poured out my complaint before him.* We may (being under oppression) tell God how it is with us, and desire him to write down our injuries. Shall not the child complain to his father when he is wronged? An holy complaint may stand with patient submission to God's will: but, though we may complain to God, we must not complain of God.

Qu. 3. *What it is cannot stand with patient submission to God's will?*

Ans. 1. Discontentedness with providence. Discontent hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and, both these, must needs raise a storm of passion in the soul. God having touched the apple of our eye, and smitten us in that we loved, we are touchy and sullen, and God shall not have a good look from us, *Gen. iv. 6. Why art thou wroth?* Like a sullen bird, that is angry, and beats herself against the cage.

2. Murmuring cannot stand with submission to God's will: murmuring is the height of impatience, it is a kind of mutiny in the

soul against God, *Numb. xxi. 5. The people spake against God.* When a cloud of sorrow is gathered in the soul, and this cloud doth not only drop into tears, but out of this cloud comes hail-stones, murmuring words against God, this is far from patient submission to God's will. When water is hot the scum boils up; when the heart is heated with anger against God, then this scum boils up. Murmuring is very evil; it springs, 1. From pride: men think they have deserved better at God's hands; and, when they begin to swell, they spit poison. 2. Distrust; men believe not that God can make a treacle of poison, bring good out of all their troubles, therefore they murmur, *Pf. cvi. 24. They believed not his word, but murmured.* Men murmur at God's providences, because they distrust his promises; God hath much ado to bear this sin. *Numb. xiv. 27.* This is far from submission to God's will.

3. Discomposedness of spirit cannot stand with quiet submission to God's will. When a man saith, I am so encompassed with trouble, that I know not how to get out; head and heart are so taken up, that a person is not fit to pray. When the strings of a lute are snarled, the lute can make no good music; so, when a Christian's spirits are perplexed and disturbed, he cannot make melody in his heart to the Lord. To be under a discomposure of mind, is as when an army is routed, one runs this way, and another that, the army is put into disorder; so, when a Christian is in an hurry of mind, his thoughts run up and down distracted, as if he were undone; this cannot stand with patient submission to God's will.

4. Self-apology cannot stand with submission to God's will; instead of being humbled under God's hand, a person justifies himself. A proud sinner stands upon his own defence, and is ready to accuse God of unrighteousness, which is, as if we should tax the sun with darkness: this is far from submission to God's will. God smote *Jonah's* gourd, and he stands upon his own vindication, *Jonah iv. 9. I do well to be angry; to the death.* What, to be angry with God! and to justify this, *I do well to be angry!* this was strange to come from a prophet, and was far from this prayer Christ hath taught us, *Thy will be done?*

Qu. 4. *What this patient submission to God's will is?*



*Ans.* It is a gracious frame of soul, whereby a Christian is content to be at God's dispose, and doth acquiesce in his wisdom, 1 Sam. iii. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Acts xxi. 14. *The will of the Lord be done.* That I may further illustrate this, I shall show you wherein this submission to the will of God lies; it lies chiefly in three things.

(1.) In acknowledging God's hand; seeing God in the affliction, *Job v. 6. Affliction ariseth not out of the dust: it comes not by chance. Job did eye God in all that befel him, Job i. 22. The Lord hath taken away:* He complains not of the Chaldeans, or the influence of the planets; he looks beyond second causes, he sees God in the affliction, *The Lord hath taken away.* There can be no submission to God's will, till there be an acknowledging of God's hand.

(2.) Patient submission to God's will lies in our justifying of God, *Pf. xxii. 2. O my God, I cry unto thee, yet thou hearest not, thou turnst a deaf ear to me in my affliction;* v. 3. *But thou art holy.* God is holy and just, not only when he punisheth the wicked, but when he afflicts the righteous. Though God put wormwood in our cup, yet we vindicate God, and proclaim his righteousness. As *Mauritius* the emperor, when he saw his son slain before his eyes, *justus es Domine*, righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways. We justify God, and confess he punisheth us less than we deserve, *Ezra ix. 13.*

(3.) Patient submission to God's will lies in the accepting of the punishment, *Lev. xxvi. 41. And they then accept of the punishments of their iniquity.* Accepting the punishment; that is, taking all that God doth in good part. He who accepts of the punishment, saith, *good is the rod of the Lord;* he kisseth the rod, yea, bleisseth God that he would use such a merciful severity, rather to afflict him than to lose him. This is patient submission to God's will.

This patient submission to God's will in affliction shows a great deal of wisdom and piety. The skill of a pilot is most discerned in a storm, and a Christian's grace in the storm of affliction; and indeed this submission to God's will is most requisite for us while we live in this lower region. In heaven there will be need of patience, no more than there is need of the star-light when the sun shines. In heaven there will be all joy, and what need of patience then? It requires no patience to wear a crown of gold; but while we live here in a valley of tears,

there needs patient submission to God's will, *Heb. x. 36. Ye have need of patience.*

1. The Lord sometimes lays heavy affliction upon us, *Pf. xxxviii. 2. Thy hand presseth me sore.* The word in the original for *afflicted*, signifies to be melted. God sometimes melts his people in a furnace.

2. God sometimes lays divers afflictions upon us, *Job xix. 17. He multiplies my wound.* God shoots divers sorts of arrows;

(1.) Sometimes God afflicts with poverty. The widow had nothing left her, save a pot of oil, 1 Kings xvii. 12. Poverty is a great temptation. To have an estate reduced almost to nothing, is hard to flesh and blood, *Ruth i. 20. Call me not Naomi, but Marah: I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.* This exposeth to contempt; when the prodigal was poor, his brother was ashamed to own him *Luke xv. 30. This thy son;* he said not, this my brother, but this thy son; he scorned to call him brother. When the deer is shot and bleeds, the rest of the herd push it away; when God shoots the arrow of poverty at one, others are ready to push him away. When *Terence* was grown poor, his friend *Scipio* cast him off. The muses (*Jupiter's* daughters) the poets feign, had no suiters, because they wanted a dowry.

(2.) God sometimes afflicts with reproach. Such as have the light of grace shining in them, yet may be eclipsed in their name. The primitive Christians were reproached as if they were guilty of incest, saith *Tertullian*. *Luther* was called, a trumpeter of rebellion. *David* calls reproach an heart-breaking, *Pf. lxxix. 20.* this God lets his dear saints be oft exercised with. Dirt may be cast upon a pearl; those names may be blotted, which are written in the book of life. Sincerity, though it shields from hell, yet not from slander.

(3.) God sometimes afflicts with the loss of dear relations, *Ezek. xxiv. 16. Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.* This is like pulling away a limb from the body. He takes away an holy child; *Jacob's* life was bound up in *Benjamin*, *Gen. xli. 30.* and that which puts teeth into the cross, and is worse than the loss of children is, when they are continued as living crosses; where the parents expected honey, there to have wormwood. What greater cut to a godly parent, than a child who disclaims his father's God! a corrosive applied to the body may do well,

but

but a bad child is a corrosive to the heart. Such an undutiful son had *David*, who conspired treason, and would not only have taken away his father's crown, but his life.

(4.) God sometimes afflicts with infirmness of body; scarce a well day. Sickness takes away the comfort of life, and makes one in death oft. Thus God tries his people with various afflictions, so that there is need of patience to submit to God's will. He who hath divers bullets shot at him needs armour; when divers afflictions assault, we need patience as armour of proof.

3. God sometimes lets the affliction continue long, *Pf. lxxiv. 9.* As it is with diseases, there are some chronical, that linger and hang about the body several years together; so it is with affliction, the Lord is pleased to exercise many of his precious ones with chronical affliction, such as ly upon them a long time: So that in all these cases we need patience and submissiveness of spirit to God's will.

*Use I.* It reproves such as have not yet learned this part of the Lord's prayer, *Thy will be done*; they have only said it, but not learned it. If things be not according to their mind, if the wind of providence crosseth the tide of their will, they are discontented and querulous. Where is now submission of will to God? To be displeased with God, if things do not please us, is this to ly at God's feet, and acquiesce in his will? This is a very bad temper of spirit, and God may justly punish us by letting us have our will. *Rachel* cried, *Give me children or I die*, *Gen. xxx. 1.* God let her have a child, but it cost her her life, *Gen. xxxv. 16.* *Israel* not content with manna (angels food) they must have quails to their manna, God punished them by letting them have their will, *Numb. xi. 31.* *There went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quails: ver. 33: And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, and the Lord smote them with a great plague.* They had better been without their quails, than had such sowe sauce to them. Many have importunately desired the life of a child, and could not bring their will to God's, to be content to part with it; and the Lord hath punished them by letting them have their will; the child hath lived and been a burden to them. Seeing their wills crossed God, their child shall cross them.

*Use II.* Of exhortation. Let us be exhort-ed, whatever troubles God doth exercise us

with, *æquo animo ferre*, to resign up our wills to God, and say, *thy will be done.* Which is fittest, that God should bring his will to ours, or we bring our will to his? Say, as *Eli*, 1 *Sam. iii. 18.* *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good:* and as *David*, 2 *Sam. xv. 26.* *Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* It was the saying of *Harpulas*, *placet mihi quod regi placet*, that pleaseth me which pleaseth the king; so should we say, that which pleaseth God pleaseth us, *thy will be done.* Some have not yet learned this art of submission to God; and truly he who wants patience in affliction, is like a soldier in battle who wants armour.

*Qu.* When do we not, as we ought, submit to God's will in affliction?

*Ans.* (1.) When we have hard thoughts of God, and our hearts begin to swell against him.

2. When we are so troubled at our present affliction, that we are unfit for duty. We can mourn as doves, but not pray or praise God. We are so discomposed, that we are not fit to hearken to any good counsel, *Exod. vi. 9.* *They hearkned not to Moses for anguish of spirit: Israel were so full of grief under their present burdens, that they minded not what Moses said, though he came with a message from God to them; they hearkned not to Moses for anguish of spirit.*

3. We do not submit as we ought to God's will, when we labour to break loose from affliction by indirect means. Many, to rid themselves out of trouble, run themselves into sin; when God hath bound them with the cords of affliction, they go to the devil to loosen their bands. Better it is to stay in affliction, than to sin ourselves out of affliction. O let us learn to stoop to God's will in all afflictive providences.

*Qu.* But how shall we bring ourselves to this Christian temper in all occurrences of providence, patiently to acquiesce in God's will, and say, *thy will be done*? We know not what trials personal or national we may be exercised with. We seem now to be under the planet Saturn, which hath a malignant aspect. Our ship is sterned so strangely, that we are in danger, on one hand, of the sands, on the other hand, of the rocks. If affliction comes, how shall we keep a Christian decorum? How shall we bear things with equanimity of mind, and say, *thy will be done*?



*Ans.* The means for a quiet resignation to God's will in affliction are,

1. Judicious consideration, *Ecc. vii. 14. In the day of adversity consider.* When any thing burdens us, or runs cross to our desires, did we but sit down and consider, and weigh things in the balance of judgment, it would much quiet our minds, and subject our wills to God; *in the day of adversity consider.* Consideration would be as *David's* harp, to charm down the evil spirit of frowardness and discontent.

*Qu.* But what should we consider?

*Ans.* That which may make us submit to God in affliction, and say *thy will be done, is,*

1. To consider, that the present state of life is subject to affliction, as a seaman's life is subject to storms; *ferre quam sortem omnes patiuntur nemo recusat: Job. v. 7. Man is born to trouble;* he is heir apparent to it; he comes into the world with a cry, and goes out with a groan. *Ea lege nati sumus.* The world is a place where much wormwood grows, *Lam. iii. 15. He hath filled me with bitterness,* *Hebr. with bitterneſſes he hath made me drunk with wormwood.* Troubles arise like sparks out of a furnace. Afflictions are some of the thorns which the earth after the curse brings forth. We may as well think to stop the chariot of the sun when it is in its swift motion, as put a stop to trouble: the consideration of this, our life is exposed to eclipses and sufferings, should make us say with patience, *thy will be done.* Shall a mariner be angry that he meets with a storm at sea?

2. Consideration, God hath a special hand in the disposal of all occurrences that fall out. *Job* eyed God in the affliction, *chap. i. 21. The Lord hath taken away.* He doth not complain of the *Sabeans*, or the influences of the planets; he looked beyond all second causes, he saw God in the affliction, and that made him cheerfully submit, *blessed be the name of the Lord.* And *Christ* looked beyond *Judas* and *Pilate*, he looked to God's determinate counsel in delivering him up to be crucified, *Acts iv. 28.* this made him say, *Mat. xxvi. 39. Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* It is vain to quarrel with instruments: wicked men are but a rod in God's hand, *Isa. x. 5. O Assyrian, the rod of my anger.* Whoever brings an affliction, God sends it: the consideration of this would make us say, *thy will be done;* what God doth, he sees a reason for. We read of a wheel within a wheel, *Ezek. i. 15.* The outward wheel, which turns

all, is providence; the wheel within this wheel, is God's decree; this believed, would rock the heart quiet. Shall we mutiny at that which God doth? We may as well quarrel with the works of creation, as the works of providence.

3. Consideration, which may make us humbly to submit to God's will, is, that there is a necessity of affliction, *1 Pet. i. 6. (if need be) ye are in heaviness.* It is needful some things be kept in brine: afflictions are needful upon several accounts,

(1.) To keep us humble. Oftimes there is no other way to have the heart low, but by being brought low, *2 Chr. xxxiii. 12. When Manasseh was in affliction he humbled himself greatly.* Corrections are corrosives to eat out the proud flesh, *Lam. iii. 19. Remembering my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul is troubled in me.*

(2.) It is necessary that there should be affliction; for if God did not sometimes bring us into affliction, how could his power be seen in bringing us out? Had not *Israel* been in the *Egyptian* furnace, God had lost his glory in their deliverance.

(3.) If there were no affliction, then many parts of scripture could not be fulfilled. God hath promised to help us to bear affliction, *Pf. xxxvii. 24, 39.* how could we experience God's supporting us in trouble, if we did not sometimes meet with it? God hath promised to give us joy in affliction, *John xvi. 20.* how could we taste this honey of joy, if we were not sometimes in affliction? Again, God hath promised to wipe away tears from our eyes, *Isa. xxv. 8.* how could God wipe away our tears in heaven, if we never shed any? So that, in several respects, there is an absolute necessity that we should meet with affliction; and, shall not we quietly submit? and say, Lord, I see there is a necessity of it; *thy will be done.*

4. Consideration, to make us submit to God's will in affliction, is, that whatever we feel, it is nothing but what we have brought upon ourselves; we put a rod into God's hand to chastise us. Christian, God lays thy crosses on thee, but it is of thy own making. If a man's field be full of tears, it is nothing but what he hath sown in it: if thou reapest a bitter crop of affliction, it is nothing but what thou thy self hast sown. The cords that pinch thee are of thy own twisting; *me-me adsum qui feci.* If children will eat green fruit, they may thank themselves if they are sick; if we eat the forbidden

fruits

fruit, no wonder to feel it grip. Sin is the Trojan horse, that lands an army of afflictions upon us, *Jer. iv. 15. A voice publisheth affliction: v. 18. Thy way and thy doings, have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness.* If we by sin run ourselves into arrears with God, no wonder if he set affliction as a sergeant on our back to arrest us. This may make us patiently submit to God in affliction, and say, *Thy will be done.* We have no cause to complain of God, it is nothing but what our sins have merited, *Jer. ii. 17. Hast not thou procured this unto thyself?* The cross, though it be of God's laying, it is of our own making; say then, as *Micah vii. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.*

5. Consideration, to cause submission to God's will in affliction, God is now about to make an experiment, he doth it to prove and try us, *Pf. lxvi. 10. Thou, O God, hast tried us as silver is tried, thou laidst affliction upon our loins.* If there were no affliction, how should God have an opportunity to try men? Hypocrites can sail in a pleasure-boat, serve God in prosperity; but when we can keep close to God in times of danger, when we can trust God when we have no pawn, and love God when we have no smile, here is the trial of sincerity! this may make us say, *thy will be done.* God is only trying us; what hurt is in that? What is the gold worse of being tried?

6. Consideration, to make us submit to God in affliction, and say, *thy will be done,* is, that in all our crosses God hath a kindness for us. As there was no night so dark, but *Israel* had a pillar of fire to give light; so there is no condition so cloudy, but we may see that which gives light of comfort: *David* would sing of mercy and judgment, *Pf. ci. 1.* This may make our wills cheerfully submit to God's, to consider in every path of providence we may see a foot-step of kindness.

Qu. *What kindness is there in affliction, when God seems most unkind?*

Ans. . There is kindness in affliction, in that there is love in it. God's rod, and God's love may stand together, *Heb. xii. 6. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth:* whom he cockereth above the rest; so *Mercer.* As *Abraham*, when he lift up his hand to sacrifice *Isaac*, loved him; so when God afflicts his people, and seems to sacrifice their outward comforts, yet he loves them: the husbandman loves his vine, when

he cuts it and makes it bleed; and, shall not we submit to God? shall we quarrel with that which hath kindness in it, which comes in love? The chirurgeon binds the patient, and lanceth him, but no wise man will quarrel with the chirurgeon, it is in love, and in order to a cure.

2. There is kindness in affliction, in that God deals with us now as children, *Heb. xii. 7.* If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons; God had one son without sin, but no son without stripes. Affliction is a badge of adoption; it is *Dei sigillum*, saith *Tertullian*, it is God's seal by which he marks us for his own. When *Maufter*, that holy man, lay sick, his friends asked him how he did? He pointed to his sores, saying, *Hae sunt gemmae Dei*, these are the jewels with which God decks his children. Shall not we then say, *Thy will be done?* Lord, there's kindness in the cross, thou usest us as children. The rod of discipline is to fit us for the inheritance.

3. There is kindness, that God hath, in all our afflictions, left us a promise; in the most cloudy providences, the promise appears as a rain-bow in the cloud.

(1.) Then we shall have God's promise with us *Pf. xci. 15. I will be with him in trouble.* It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is; I will be with him, *i. e.* To support, sanctify, sweeten; God's presence is a sweetning ingredient into every affliction. I had rather be in prison, and have God's presence, than be in a palace, and want it.

(2.) Promise, that he will lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear, *1 Cor. x. 13.* God will not try us beyond our strength; either God will make the yoke lighter, or our faith stronger: may not this make us submit our wills to God, when afflictions have so much kindness in them? In all our trials God hath left us promises, which are like manna in the wilderness.

4. This is great kindness, that all the troubles that befall us shall be for our profit, *Heb. xii. 10. Be for our profit:*

Qu. *But what profit is in affliction?*

Ans. 1. Afflictions are disciplinary, they teach us, *Schola crucis, Schola lucis.* Many psalms have this inscription: *Maschil*, a psalm giving instruction: affliction many have this inscription upon it, *Maschil*, an affliction giving instruction, *Micah vi. 9. Hear ye the rod.* *Luther* saith, he could never rightly understand some



some of the psalms, till he was in affliction, *Judg. viii. 16.* Gideon took thorns of the wilderness, and briars, and with them he taught the men of Succoth: God by the thorns and briars of affliction teacheth us.

(1.) Affliction shows us more of our own hearts than ever. Water in a glass-vial looks clear; but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up; when God sets us upon the fire, then we see that corruption boils up which we did not discern before. Sharp afflictions are to the soul as a soaking rain to the houses, we know not that there are such holes in the house, till the shower comes, and then we see it drop down here and there; so, we before did not know that there were such unmortified lusts in the soul, till the storm of affliction comes, then we spy unbelief, impatience, carnal fear, we see it drop down in many places. Thus affliction is a sacred collyrium, it clears our eye-sight; the rod gives wisdom.

(2.) Affliction brings those sins to remembrance, which before we buried in the grave of forgetfulness. *Joseph's* brethren, for twenty years together, were not at all troubled for their sin in selling their brother; but when they came into *Egypt*, and began to be in straits, then their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, and their hearts did smite them, *Gen. xlii. 21.* They said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother. When a man is in distress, now his sin comes fresh into his mind; conscience makes a rehearsal-sermon of all the evils which have passed in his life; now his expence of precious time, his sabbath-breaking, his slighting of the word, come into his remembrance, and he goes out with *Peter* and weeps bitterly. Thus the rod gives wisdom, it shows the hidden evil of the heart, and brings former sins to remembrance.

3. There is profit in affliction, as it quickens a spirit of prayer, *premuntur iusti ut pre-si-clament.* *Jonah* was asleep in the ship, but at prayer in the whale's belly. Perhaps, in a time of health and prosperity, we prayed in a cold and formal manner, we put no coals to the incense, we did scarce mind our own prayers, and how should God mind them? Now, God sends some crosses or other to make us stir up ourselves to take hold of God: when *Jacob* was in fear of his life by his brother, then he wrestles with God, and weeps in prayer, and would not leave God till he blessed him,

*Hos. xii. 4.* It is with many of God's children, as with those who formerly had the sweating sickness in this land, it was a sleepy disease, if they slept they died; therefore, to keep them waking, they were smitten with rosemary branches; so, the Lord useth affliction as a rosemary branch to keep us from sleeping, and to awaken a spirit of prayer, *Isa. xxvi. 16.* They poured out a prayer, when thy chastening hand was upon them; now their prayer pierced heaven: in times of trouble we pray feelingly, and we never pray so fervently as when we pray feelingly; and, is not this for our profit?

3. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to expectorate and purge out our sin, *Isa. xxvii. 9.* By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged. Affliction is God's physic to expel the noxious humour, it cures the imposthume of pride, the fever of lust; and, is not this for our profit? Affliction is God's file to fetch off our rust, his flail to thresh off our husks: the water of affliction is not to drown us, but to wash off our spots.

4. To be under the black rod, is profitable, in that hereby we grow more serious, and are more careful to clear our evidence for heaven: in times of prosperity, when the rock poured out rivers of oil, *Job xxix. 6.* We were careless in getting, at least clearing our title to glory. Had many no better evidences for their land, than they have for their salvation, they were but in an ill case; but when an hour of trouble comes, we begin to look after our spiritual evidences, and see how things stand between God and our souls; and, is it not for our profit to see our interest in Christ more cleared than ever?

5. Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to take us more off from the world; the world oft proves not only a speeder's web, but a cockatrice egg: pernicious worldly things are great enchantments, they are *retinacula spei*, *Tertul.* They hinder us in our passage to heaven. If a clock be overwound, it stands still; so, when the heart is wound up too much to the world; it stands still to heavenly things: affliction sounds a retreat to call us off the immoderate pursuit of earthly things: when things are frozen: and congealed together, the only way to separate them, is, by fire; so, when the heart and the world are congealed together, God hath no better way to separate them, than by the fire of affliction.

6. Affliction

6. Affliction is our profit, as it is a refiner; it works us to further degrees of sanctity, *Heb. xii. 10. He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* The vessels of mercy are the brighter for scouring: you pour water on your linnen when you would whiten it; God pours the water of affliction upon us, to lay our souls a-whitening. The leaves of the fig-tree, and root are bitter, but the fruit is sweet: afflictions are in themselves bitter, but they bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness, *Heb. xii. 11.* This may make us submit to God, and say, *Thy will be done*; there's kindness in affliction, it is for our spiritual profit.

5. There's kindness in affliction, in that there is no condition so bad, but it might be worse; when it is dulkish it might be darker: God doth not make our crosses so heavy as it might, he doth not stir up all his anger, *Pf. lxxviii. 38.* He doth not put so many nails in our yoke, so much wormwood in our cup, as he might. Doth God chastise thy body? He might torture thy conscience: Doth he cut thee short? He might cut thee off: the Lord might make our chains heavier. It is a burning fever? It might have been a burning lake: Doth God use the pruning knife to lop thee? He might bring his axe to hew thee down, *Ezek. xlvii. 3. The waters were up to the ancles.* Do the waters of affliction come up to the ancles? God might make them rise higher; nay, he might drown thee in the waters. This may make us submit quietly, and say, *Thy will be done*, because there is so much kindness in it; whereas God useth the rod, he might use the scorpion.

6. There is kindness in affliction, in that your case is not so bad as others; they are always upon the rack, they spend their years with sighing, *Pf. xxxi. 10.* Have you a gentle fit of the ague? Others cry out of the stone and strangulation: Do you bear the wrath of men? Others bear the wrath of God; you have but a single trial, others have them twisted together; God shoots but one arrow at you, he shoots a shower of arrows at others: is there not kindness in all this? We are apt to say, never any suffered as we? Was it not worse with *Lazarus*, who was so full of sores, that the dogs took pity on him, and licked his sores? Nay, was it not worse with *Christ*, who lived poor and died cursed? May not this cause us to say, *Thy will be done*? There is

kindness in it, that God deals not so severely with us as with others.

7. There is kindness in affliction, in that (if we belong to God) it is all the hell we shall have. Some have two hells, they suffer in their body, and conscience; here is one hell, and another hell is to come, unquenchable fire. *Judas* had two hells, but a child of God hath but one hell. *Lazarus* had all his hell here; he was full of sores, but had a convoy of angels to carry him to heaven when he died. Say then, Lo, if this be the worst I shall have, if this be all my hell, I will patiently acquiesce, *Thy will be done.*

8. There is kindness, in that God gives gracious supports in affliction; if he strikes with one hand he will support with the other, *Deut. xxxiii. 27. Underneath are the everlasting arms.* There is not the least trial, but, if God did desert us, and not assist us with his grace, we should sink under it: the frown of a great man, the fear of reproach; *Peter* was frightened at the voice of a maid, *Mat. xxvi. 69.* O therefore, what mercy is it to have *Christ* strengthen us, and as it were bar the heaviest part of the cross with us. One said, I have no ravishing joys in my sickness, but I bless God, I have sweet supports: and should not this cause submission to God's will, and make us say, if thou art so kind as to bear us up in affliction, that we do not faint, put us into what wine-press thou pleasest, *Thy will be done.*

9. There is kindness in affliction, in that it is preventive.

(1.) God by this stroke of his, would prevent some sin: *Paul's thorn in the flesh* was to prevent his being lifted up in pride, *2 Cor. xii. 7.* As affliction is sometimes sent for the punishing of sin, so sometimes for the preventing of sin. Prosperity exposeth to much evil; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. God's people know not how much they are beholding to their affliction, they might have fallen into some scandal, had not God set an hedge of thorns in their way to stop them; what kindness is this? God lets us fall into sufferings, to prevent falling into shares: say, then Lord, do as it seems good in thy sight, *Thy will be done.*

(2.) God by affliction would prevent damnation, *1 Cor. xi. 32. We are corrected in the world, that we may not be condemned with the world.* A man, by falling into the briars, is saved



ved from falling into the river : God lets us fall into the briars of affliction, that we may not drown in perdition. It is a great favour when a lesser punishment is inflicted, to prevent a greater : is it not clemency in the judge, when he lays some light penalty on the prisoner, and saves his life ? so, when God lays upon us light affliction, and saves us from wrath to come. As *Pilate* said, *Luke* xxiii. 16. *I will chastise him, and let him go* : so God chastiseth his children, and lets them go, frees them from eternal torment. What is a drop of sorrow the godly taste, to that sea of wrath, the wicked shall be drinking of to all eternity ? O what kindness is here ! may not this make us say, *thy will be done* ? It is preventing physic.

10. There is kindness, in that God doth mix his providences, *Hab.* iii. 2. *In anger he remembers mercy*. Not all pure gall, but some honey mixed with it. *Asher's* shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipped in oil, *Gen.* xxxiii. 24. Affliction is the shoe of brass, but God causeth the foot to be dipped in oil. As the limner mixeth with his dark shadows bright colours ; so the wise God mingles the dark and bright colours, crosses and blessings. The body is afflicted, but within is peace of conscience ; there is a blessing. *Joseph* was sold into *Egypt*, and put in prison : there was the dark side of the cloud. *Job* lost all that ever he had, his skin was clothed with boils and ulcers ; here was a sad providence. But God gave a testimony from heaven of *Job's* integrity, and did afterwards double his estate, *Job* xlii. 10. *The Lord gave Job twice as much* : here was the goodness of God seen towards *Job*. God doth chequer his works of providence, and shall not we submit and say, Lord, if thou art so kind, mixing so many bright colours with my dark condition, *thy will be done*.

11. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth moderate his stroke, *Jer.* xxx. 11. *I will correct thee in measure*. God will in the day of his east-wind stay his rough wind, *Isa.* xxvii. 8. The physician that understands the crisis and temper of the patient, will not give too strong physic for the body, nor will he give one dram or scruple too much : God knows our frame, he will not over-afflict ; he will not stretch the strings of his viol too hard, lest they break. And, is there not kindness in all this ? may not this work our hearts to submission ? Lord, if thou usest so much gentleness, and correctest in measure, *thy will be done*.

12. There is kindness in affliction, in that God often sweetens it with divine consolation, *1 Cor.* i. 4. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation*. After a bitter potion, a lump of sugar. God comforts in affliction.

(1.) Partly by his word, *Pf.* cxix. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me*. The promises of the word are a shop of cordials.

(2.) God comforts by his spirit. *Philip*, landgrave of *Hesse*, said, that in his troubles *Se divinas martyrum consolationes sensisset*, he felt the divine consolations of the martyrs. *David* had his pilgrimage-songs, *Pf.* cxlix. 54. and *St. Paul* his prison-songs, *Acts* xvi. 25. Thus God candies our wormwood with sugar, and makes us gather grapes of thorns. Some of the saints have such ravishing joys in affliction, that they had rather endure their sufferings, than want their comforts : O how much kindness is in the cross ! In the belly of this lion is an honeycomb : may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, when God lines the yoke with comfort, and gives us honey at the end of the rod ?

13. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth curtail and shorten it ; he will not let it ly on too long, *Isa.* lvii. 16. *I will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail me*. God will give his people a writ of ease, and proclaim a year of jubilee ; the wicked may plow upon the backs of the saints, but God will cut their traces, *Pf.* cxxix. 4. The goldsmith will not let his gold ly any longer in the furnace, than till it be purified. The wicked must drink a sea of wrath, but the godly have only a cup of affliction, *Isa.* li. 17. and God will say, *Let this cup pass away*. Affliction may be compared to frost, it will break, and spring-flowers will come on, *Isa.* xxxv. *Sorrow and sighing shall fly away*. Affliction hath a sting, but withal a wing, sorrow shall fly away ; this land-flood shall be dried up. If then there be so much kindness in the cross, God will cause a cessation of trouble ; say then *fiat voluntas tua, thy will be done*.

14. *Ult.* There is kindness in affliction, in that it is a means to make us happy. *Job* v. 17. *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth*. This seems strange to flesh and blood, that affliction should make one happy : when *Moses* saw the bush burning and not consumed, *I will* (saith he) *turn aside and see this strange sight*, *Exod.* iii. 3. So here is a strange sight, a man afflicted,

afflicted, yet happy. The world counts them happy who can escape affliction, but happy is the man whom God correcteth.

*Qu. But how do afflictions contribute to our happiness?*

*Ans.* 1. As they are a means to bring us nearer to God; the loadstone of prosperity doth not draw us so near to God, as the cords of *affliction*; when the prodigal was pinched with want, then saith he, *I will arise and go to my father*, Luke xv. 18. The deluge brought the dove to the ark: the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ.

2. *Afflictions* make us happy, as they are manuductions to glory. The storm drives the ship into the harbour: happy is that storm which drives the soul into the heavenly harbour. Is it not better to go through *affliction* to glory, than through pleasure to misery? Not that *afflictions* merit glory: no cross ever merited, but that which Christ endured; but they do *disponere*, fit, and prepare us for glory. Think, O christian, what *affliction* leads to, it leads to paradise, where are rivers of pleasure always running: may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, and say, Lord, if there be so much kindness in *affliction*, if all thou dost is to make us happy, *thy will be done*.

7. Consideration, it is God's ordinary course, to keep his people to a bitter diet-drink, and exercise them with great trials. *Affliction* is the beaten road all the saints have gone in: the lively stones in the spiritual building have been all hewn and polished; Christ's lily hath grown among the thorns, 2 Tim. iii. 12. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*. 'Tis too much for a christian to have two heavens, that is more than Christ had. It hath been ever the lot of the saints to encounter with sore trials: both of the prophets, James v. 10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of suffering affliction*: And of the apostles; Peter was crucified with his head downward, James beheaded by Herod, John banished into the isle of *Patmos*, the apostle Thomas thrust thorow with a spear, *Matthias* (who was chosen apostle in Judas's room) was stoned to death, Luke the evangelist hanged on an olive-tree. Those saints, of whom the world was not worthy, did pass under the rod, Heb. xi. 36. Christ's kingdom is *regnum crucis*, this is the way God hath always gone in: such as God intends to save from hell, yet he doth not save from the cross. The conside-

ration of this should quiet our minds in *affliction*, and make us say, *thy will be done*. Do we think God will alter his course of providence for us? why should we look for exemption from trouble, more than others? why should we think to tread only upon roses and violets, when prophets and apostles have marched through the briars to heaven?

8. Consideration, God hath done that for thee, christian, which may make thee content to suffer any thing at his hand, and say, *thy will be done*.

(1.) He hath adopted thee for his child. *David* thought it no small honour to be the king's son-in-law, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. What an honour is it to derive thy pedigree from heaven, to be born of God? why then art thou troubled, and murmurest at every slight cross? As *Jonadab* said to *Amnon*, 2 Sam. xiii. 4. *Why art thou, being the king's son, lean?* So, why art thou, who art son or daughter to the king of heaven, troubled at these petty things? what, the king's son, and look lean! This may quiet thy spirit, and bring thy will to God's; he hath dignified thee with honour, he made thee his son and heir, and will entail a kingdom on thee.

(2.) God hath given thee Christ. Christ is *communis thesaurus*, a magazine and store-house of all heavenly treasure; a pearl of price to enrich, a tree of life to quicken; he is the quintessence of all blessings: why then art thou discontented at thy worldly crosses? They cannot be so bitter as Christ is sweet. As *Seneca* said once to *Polybius*, *why dost thou complain of hard fortune*, salvo *Cæsare*? Is not *Cæsar* thy friend? So, is not Christ thy friend? He can never be poor, who hath a mine of gold in his field; nor he who hath the unsearchable riches of Christ: say then, Lord, *thy will be done*; tho' I have my cross, yet I have *Christ* with it. The crosses may make me weep, but *Christ* wipes off all tears, Rev. vii. 17.

(3.) God hath given thee grace. Grace is the rich embroidery and workmanship of the holy Ghost; it is the sacred unction, 1 John ii. 27. The graces are a chain of pearl to adorn, and beds of spices which make us a sweet odour to God: grace is a distinguishing blessing, Christ gave *Judas* his purse, but not his spirit. May not this quiet the heart in affliction, and make it say, *thy will be done*? Lord, thou hast given that jewel which thou bestowest only on the elect: grace is a seal of thy love, it is both food and cordial, it is an earnest of glory.



9. Consideration, When *God* intends the greatest mercy to any of his people, he brings them low in affliction. *God* seems to go quite cross to sense and reason; when he intends to raise us highest, he brings us lowest. As *Moses's* hand, before it wrought miracles, was leprous; and *Sarah's* womb, before it brought forth the son of the promise, was barren; *God* brings us low before he raiseth us, as water is at the lowest ebb before there is a spring tide.

(1.) It is true in a temporal sense. When *God* would bring *Israel* to *Canaan*, a land flowing with milk and honey, he first leads them through a sea and a wilderness. When *God* intended to advance *Joseph* to be the second man in the kingdom, he cast him first into prison, and the irons entred into his soul, *Pf. cv. 18.* *God* usually lets it be darkest before the morning-star of deliverance appears.

(2.) It is true in a spiritual sense. When *God* intends to raise a soul to spiritual comfort, he first lays it low in desertion, *Isa. xii. 1.* As the limner lays his dark colour first, and then lays his gold colour on it; so *God* first lays the soul in the dark of desertion, and then he lays his golden colour of joy and consolation. May not this make us cheerfully submit, and say, *Thy will be done*? Perhaps now *God* afflicts me, he is about to raise me, he intends me a greater mercy than I am aware of.

10. Consideration, the excellency of this frame of soul, to ly at *God's* feet and say, *Thy will be done.*

(1.) A soul that is melted into *God's* will shows variety of grace. As the holy ointment was made up of several aromatic spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, *Exod. xxx. 23.* so this sweet temper of soul, submission to *God's* will in affliction, hath in it a mixture of several graces: in particular, it is compounded of three graces: faith, love, humility. 1. Faith: faith believes *God* doth all in mercy, that affliction is to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; that *God* corrects in love and faithfulness, *Pf. cxix. 75.* the belief of this, causeth submission of will to *God.* 2. Love thinks no evil, *1 Cor. xiii. 5.* Love takes all *God* doth in the best sense, it hath good thoughts of *God*; this causeth submission, *thy will be done.* Let the righteous *God* smite me (faith love) it shall be a kindness, yea, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. 3. Humility: the humble soul looks on its sins, and how it hath provoked *God*; he saith not his afflictions are great, but

his sins are great; this makes him ly at *God's* feet, and say, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,* Micah vii. 9. Thus a submissive frame of heart is full of grace, it is compounded of several graces; it pleaseth *God* to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised; he saith of such a christian, as *David* of *Goliath's* sword, *1 Sam. xxi. 9.* *None like that, give it me.*

(2.) He who puts his fiat & placet to *God's* will, and saith, *thy will be done*, shows not only variety of grace, but strength of grace. It argues much strength in the body, to be able to endure hard weather, yet not to be altered by it; so to endure hard trials, yet not faint or fret, shows more than ordinary strength of grace. You that can say, you have brought your wills to *God's*; *God's* will and yours agree, as the copy and the original; let me assure you, you have outstript many christians, who perhaps shine in an higher orb of knowledge than you. To be content to be at *God's* dispose, to be any thing that *God* will have us, shows a noble heroic soul. It is reported of the eagle, it is not like other fowls; they, when they are hungry, make a noise, the ravens cry for food, but the eagle is never heard to make a noise, though it wants meat, and it is from the nobleness and greatness of its spirit; the eagle is above other fowls, and hath a spirit suitable to its nature; so it is an argument of an holy gallantry and magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever cross providences befall a christian, he doth not cry and whine as others, but is silent, and lies quietly at *God's* feet: here is much strength of grace in such a soul, nay, the height of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to say, *Lord, thy will be done*; but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses and trials, now to say, *thy will be done*, is a glorious thing indeed, and prepares for the garland of honour.

11. Consideration, persons are usually better in adversity than in prosperity, therefore stoop to *God's* will. A prosperous condition is not always so safe: 'tis true, it is more pleasing to the palate, and every one desires to get on the warm side of the hedge, where the sun of prosperity shines, but it is not always best; in a prosperous estate, there is more burden: many look at the shining and glittering of prosperity, but not at the burden, *plus oneris.*

(1.) The burden of care, therefore *Christ* calls riches, *care*, *Luke viii. 14.* A rose hath its prickles, so have riches: we think them happy that

that flourish in their silks and cloth of gold, but we see not the troubles and cares that attend them. A shoe may have silver-lace on it, yet pinch the foot. Many a man that goes to his day-labour, lives a more contented life, than he that hath his thousands *per annum*. Disquieting care is the *malus genius*, the evil spirit that haunts the rich man: when his chests are full of gold, his heart is full of care how to encrease, or how to secure what he hath gotten: he is sometimes full of care whom he shall leave it to. A large estate, like a long trailing garment, is oft more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous estate there is the burden of account. Such as are in high places, have a far greater account to give to God than others, *Luke xii. 48. Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.* The more golden talents any are entrusted with, the more they have to answer for; the more their revenues, the more their reckonings. God will say, I gave you a great estate, what have you done with it? how have you employed it for my glory? I have read of *Philip king of Spain*, when he was to die, he said, *O that I had never been a king! O that I had lived a private solitary life! Here is all the fruit of my kingdom, it hath made my accounts heavier.* So then, may not this quiet our hearts in a low adverse condition, and make us say, *Lord, thy will be done?* as thou hast given me a less portion of worldly things, so I have a less burden of care, and a less burden of account.

2. A prosperous condition hath *plus periculi*, more danger in it. Such as are on the top of the pinnacle of honour, are in more danger of falling, they are subject to many temptations; their table is set more. *Heliogabalus* made ponds of sweet water to bathe in; millions are drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure. A great fall overturns the vessel; how many, by having too great sails of prosperity, have had their souls overturned? It must be a strong head that bears heady wine; he had need have much wisdom and grace that knows how to bear an high condition. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. *Agur* feared, if he were full, he should deny God, and say, *Who is the Lord?* *Prov. xxx. 9.* Prosperity breeds, 1. Pride: the children of *Kobath* were in an higher estate than the rest of the *Levites*, they were employed in the tabernacle about the most holy things of all, *Numb. iv. 4.* they had the first lot, *Josh. xxi. 10.* but as

they were lifted up above others of the *Levites* in honour, so in pride, *Numb. xvi. 4.* In the *Thames*, when the tide riseth higher, the boat riseth higher; so, when the tide of an estate riseth higher, many mens hearts rise higher in pride. 2. Prosperity breeds security. *Sampson* fell asleep in *Dailah's* lap, so do men in the lap of ease and plenty: the world's golden sands are quick-sands. How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven? *Luke xviii. 24.* The consideration of this should make us submit to God in adversity, and say, *thy will be done.* God sees what is best for us; if we have less estate, we are in less danger; if we want the honours of others, so we want their temptations.

12. Consideration, the having of our wills melted into God's, is a good sign that the present affliction is sanctified: then an affliction is sanctified, when it attains the end for which it was sent. The end why God sends affliction, is to calm the spirit, to subdue the will, and bring it to God's will; when this is done, affliction hath attained the end for which it came; it is sanctified, and it will not be long ere it be removed. When the sore is healed, the smarting plaister is taken off.

13. Consideration, how unworthy it is of a christian to be toward and unsubmitive, and not bring his will to God.

(1.) It is below the spirit of a christian. The spirit of a christian is dove-like, 'tis meek and sedate, willing to be at God's dispose; *Not my will, but thy will be done*, *Luke xxii. 42.* A christian spirit is not fretful, but humble; not craving, but contented. See the picture of a christian spirit in *St. Paul*, *Phil. iv. 12. I know how to be abased, and how to abound.* Paul could be either higher or lower, as God saw good; he could sail with any wind of providence, either a prosperous or boisterous gale, his will was melted into God's will: now to be of a cross spirit, that cannot submit to God, is unworthy of the spirit of a christian; 'tis like the bird, that, because 'tis pent up in the cage, and cannot fly in the open air, beats himself against the cage.

(2.) A froward unsubmitive frame, that cannot submit to God's will, is unworthy of a christian's profession: he professeth to live by faith, yet repines at his condition, *Faith lives not by bread alone*, it feeds on promises, it makes future glory present; faith sees all in God; *When the fig-tree doth not blossom, faith can*



joy in the God of its salvation, Hab. iii. 17. Now, to be troubled at the present estate, because low and mean, where is faith? Sure that is a weak faith, or no faith, which must have crutches to support it. O be ashamed to call thyself *believer*, if thou canst not trust God, and acquiesce in his will, in the deficiency of outward comforts.

(2.) To be of a froward unsubmissive spirit, that cannot surrender its will unto God, is unworthy of the high dignities God hath put upon a christian. 1. He is a rich heir; he is exalted above all creatures that ever God made, except the angels; yea, in some sense, as his nature is joined in an hypostatical union to the divine nature, so he is above the angels: O then, how is it below his dignity, for want of a few earthly comforts, to be froward, and ready to quarrel with the Deity? is it not unworthy of a king's son, because he may not pluck such a flower, to be discontented and rebel against his royal father? 2. A christian is espoused to Jesus Christ: what, to be married to Christ, yet froward and unsubmissive? hast not thou enough in him? as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, 1 Sam. i. 8. *Am not I better than ten sons?* is not Christ better than a thousand worldly comforts? *Omnia bona in summo bono*. 'Tis a disparagement to Christ, that his spouse should be froward, when she is matched into the crown of heaven.

(4.) To be of a froward unsubmissive spirit, is unsuitable to the prayers of a christian; he prays, *thy will be done*: it is the will of God he should meet with such troubles, whether sickness, loss of estate, crosses in children, God hath decreed, and ordered it; why then is there not submission? why are we discontented at that which we pray for? It is a saying of *Latimer*, speaking of *Peter*, who denied his master, *Peter*, saith he, forgot his prayer, for that was, *hallowed be thy name*. So, oft we forget our prayers, nay, contradict them; for we pray, *thy will be done*. Now, if unsubmissiveness to God be so unworthy of a christian, should not we labour to bring our wills to God's, and say, Lord, let me not disparage religion, let me do nothing unworthy of a christian.

14. Consideration, frowardness and unsubmissiveness of will to God, is very sinful.

(1.) It is sinful in its nature; to murmur when God crosseth us in our will shows much ungodliness. The apostle *Jude* speaks of ungodly ones, v. 15. and that we may better know who these are, he sets a mark upon them, v. 16.

*These are murmurers*. Some think they are not so ungodly as others, because they do not swear, or are drunk, but you may be ungodly in murmuring; there are not only ungodly drunkards; but ungodly murmurers; nay, this is the height of ungodliness, namely, rebellion. *Korah* and his company murmured against God, and see how the Lord interprets this, *Numb. xvii. 10. Bring Aaron's rod to be kept for a token against the rebels*; to be a murmurer, and a rebel, is, in God's account, all one; *Numb. xx. 13. This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord*. How did they strive with God, because they murmured at his providence, v. 3. What wilt thou be a rebel against God? It is a shame for a servant to strive with his master, but what is it for a creature to strive with its maker.

(2.) To quarrel with God's providence, and be unsubmissive to his will, is sinful in the spring and cause; it ariseth from pride. 'Twas Satan's temptation, *ye shall be as Gods*, Gen. iii. 5. A proud person makes a god of himself, he disdains to have his will crossed; he thinks himself better than others, therefore he finds fault with God's wisdom, that he is not above others.

(3.) Quarrellousness and unsubmissiveness to God's will, is sinful in the concomitants of it. 1. It is joined with sinful risings of the heart. (1.) Evil thoughts arise. We think hardly of God, as if he had done us wrong, or, as if we had deserved better at his hands. (2.) Passions begin to arise; the heart secretly frets against God. *Jonah* was crossed in his will, and passion began to boil in him, *Jonah iv. 1. He was very angry*. *Jonah's* spirit, as well as the sea, wrought, and was tempestuous. 2. Unsubmissiveness of will is joined with unthankfulness, because in some one thing we are afflicted, we forget all the mercies we have; we deal with God, just as the widow of *Sarepta* did with the prophet: the prophet *Elijah* had been a means to keep her alive in the famine, but as soon as her child dies, she quarrels with the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 18. *O thou man of God, art thou come to slay my son?* So do we deal with God; we can be content to receive blessings at his hand, but as soon as he doth in the least thing cross us in our will, we grow touchy, and are ready in a passion to fly out against him: thus God loseth all his mercies, and is not this high ingratitude?

(4.) Frowardness and unsubmissiveness to God's

God's will, is evil in the effects. 1. It unfit for duty: it is bad sailing in a storm, and it is ill praying when the heart is stormy and unquiet: it is well if such prayers do not suffer ship-wrack. (2.) Unsubmissiveness of spirit sometimes unfit for the use of reason. *Jonah* was discontented, because he had not his will; God withered the gourd, and his heart fretted against God; and in the midst of his passion, he spake no better than nonsense and blasphemy, *Jonah* iv. 9. *I do well to be angry to the death.* Sure he did not know well what he said: what, to be angry with God, and die for anger? He speaks as if he had lost the use of his reason. Thus unsubmissiveness of will is sinful in its nature, causes, concomitants, effects; may not this martyr our wills, and bring our wills to God in every thing, making us say, *thy will be done.*

15. Consideration, unsubmissiveness to God's will is very imprudent, we get nothing by it, it doth not ease us of our burden, but rather makes it heavier. The more the child struggles with the parent, the more it is beaten; when we struggle with God, and will not submit to his will, we get nothing but more blows. Instead of having our cords of affliction loosened, we make God tie them the straiter. Let us then submit and say, *Lord, thy will be done.* Why should I spin out my own trouble by impatience, and make my cross heavier? What got *Israel* by their frowardness, they were within eleven days journey of *Canaan*, they fell a murmuring, and God leads them a march of forty years longer in the wilderness.

16. Consideration, the mischief of being unsubmissive to God's will in affliction, it lays a man open to many temptations. When the heart frets against God by discontent, here's good fishing for Satan in these troubled waters. He usually puts discontented persons upon indirect means. *Job's* wife fretted (so far was she from holy submission) and she presently puts her husband upon cursing of God, *Job* ii. 9. *Curse God and die.* What is the reason why some have turned *witches*, and given themselves to the devil, but out of envy and discontent, because they have not had their will. Others being under a temptation of poverty, and not having their wills in living at such an high rate as others, have laid violent hands upon themselves. O the temptations that men of discontented spirits are exposed to! Here (saith Satan) is good fishing for me.

17. Consideration, how far unsubmissiveness of spirit is from that temper of soul which God requires in affliction. God would have us in patience possess our souls, *Lu'e* xxi. 19. The Greek word for patience, signifies to bear up under a burden without fainting or fretting; but to be froward in affliction, and quarrel with God's will, where is this Christian patience? God would have us rejoice in affliction, *James* i. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;* that is, afflictions, *count it joy,* be as birds that sing in winter, *1 Thess.* i. 6. *Ye received the word in affliction with joy.* Paul could leap in his fetters, and sing in the stocks, *Acts* xvi. 25. How far is a discontented soul from this frame; he is far from rejoicing in affliction that hath not learned to submit.

18. Consideration, what is it makes the difference between a Godly man and an ungodly man in affliction, but only this, the Godly man submits to God's will, the ungodly man will not submit: a wicked man frets and fumes, and is like a wild bull in a net. He in affliction blasphemes God, *Rev.* xvi. 9. *Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.* Put a stone in the fire, and it flies in your face; stoney hearts fly in God's face. A stuff that is rotten, the more it is rubbed, the more it frets and tears? When God afflicts the sinner, he tears himself in anger: but a Godly man is sweetly submissive to God's will; this is his speech, *shall not I drink the cup which my father hath given me?* Spices, when they are bruised, send out a sweet fragrant smell; when God bruisseth his saints, they send out the sweet perfume of patience. *Servulus*, an holy man, long afflicted with the palsy, yet this was his ordinary speech, *laudetur Deus*, let God be praised; O let us say, *thy will be done;* let us bear that patiently which God inflicteth justly, else how do we show our grace? What difference is there between us and the wicked in affliction?

19. Consideration, not to submit to God's providential will, is highly provoking to God. Can we anger God more than by quarreling with him, and not let him have his will? Kings do not love to have their will opposed, though they may be unjust: how ill doth God take it, when we will be disputing against his righteous will? It is a sin God cannot bear, *Numb.* xiv. 26. 27. *How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me?* May not God justly say thus, how long shall I bear with



with this wicked person, who, when any thing falls out cross, murmurs against me? *Ver. 28. Say unto them, as truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you.* God swears against a murmurer, *as I live*; and what will God do as he lived? *Ver. 29. Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness.* You see how provoking a discontented quarrelsome spirit is to God, it may cost men their lives, nay, their soul. God sent fiery serpents among the people for their murmuring, *1 Cor. x. 10.* He may send worse than fiery serpents, he may send hell-fire.

20. Consideration, how much doth God bear it at our hand, and shall not we be content to bear something at his hand? It would tire the patience of angels to bear with us one day, *2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is long-suffering towards us.* How oft do we offend in our eye by envious impure glances? In our tongues by rash censuring? but God passeth by many injuries, he bears with us. Should the Lord punish us every time we offend, he might draw his sword every day, shall God bear so much at our hands, and can we bear with nothing at his hands? shall God be patient with us, and we impatient with him? Shall he be meek, and we murmur? Shall he endure our sins, and shall not we endure his strokes? Oh let us say, *Thy will be done.* Lord, thou hast been the greatest sufferer, thou hast born more from me, than I can from thee.

21. Consideration, submitting our wills to God in affliction disappoints Satan of his hope, and quite spoils his design. The devil's end is in all our affliction to make us sin. The reason why Satan did finite Job in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind, and put him into a passion; he hoped that Job would have been discontented, and in a fit of anger not only have cursed his birth-day, but curse his God. But Job lying at God's feet, and blessing him in affliction, disappointed Satan of his hope, and quite spoiled his plot. Had Job murmured, he had pleased Satan; had he fallen into an heat, and sparks of his anger flown about, the devil had warmed himself at this fire of Job's passion; but Job quietly submitted and blessed God: here Satan's design was frustrated, and he missed of his intent. The devil hath oft deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by quiet submission to God in all things, saying, *thy will be done.*

22. Consideration, it may rock our hearts

quiet in affliction, to consider, that to the Godly the nature of affliction is quite changed; to a wicked man it is a curse, the rod is turned into a serpent; affliction to him is but an effect of God's displeasure, the beginning of sorrow: but the nature of affliction is quite changed to a believer, it is by divine chymistry turned into a blessing; it is like poison corrected, which becomes a medicine; it is a love token, a badge of adoption, a preparatory to glory; should not this make us say, *thy will be done*? The poison of the affliction is gone; it is not hurtful, but healing. This hath made the saints not only patient in affliction, but have sounded forth thankfulness: as bells, when they have been cast in the fire, do afterwards make a sweeter sound; so the Godly, after they have been cast into the fire of affliction, have sounded forth God's praise, *Pf. cxix. 14. It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* Job i. 21. *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*

23. Consideration, to make us submit our will to God in affliction, is, to think how many good things we receive from God, and shall not we be content to receive some evil? Job ii. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* In the Hebrew, *shall we receive good from God, and not evil?* This may make us say, *thy will be done.* How many blessings have we received at the hand of God's bounty? We have been bemiracled with mercy; what sparing, preventing, delivering mercy have we had! the honeycomb of mercy hath continually dropped upon us, *Lam. iii. 23. His mercies are new every morning.* Mercy comes in as constantly as the tide; nay, how many tides of mercy do we see in one day? We never feed, but mercy carves every bit to us; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy; we never go abroad, but mercy sets a guard of angels about us; we never ly down in our bed, but mercy draws the curtains of protection close about us: now, shall we receive so many good things at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? our mercies far outweigh our afflictions; for one affliction we have a thousand mercies; O then let us submit to God, and say, *Thy will be done*; the sea of God's mercy should swallow up a few drops of affliction.

24. Consideration, to bring our wills to God in affliction doth much honour the gospel: an unsubmitive Christian reproacheth religion, as if it were not able to subdue an unruly spirit;

it; it is weak physic, which cannot purge out ill humours: and sure it is a weak gospel, if it cannot master our discontent, and martyr our wills: unsubmitiveness is a reproach, but a cheerful resignation of our will to God sets a crown of honour upon the head of religion, it shows the power of the gospel, which can charm down the passions, and melt the will into God's will; therefore in scripture submissive patience is brought in as an adorning grace, *Rev. xiv.*

21. *Here is the patience of the saints.*

25. Consideration, the example of our Lord Jesus, how flexible and submissive was he to his Father! he who taught us this prayer, *thy will be done*, had learned it himself; Christ's will was perfectly turned to his Father's will; it was the will of his Father that he should die for our sins, and he *endured the cross*, *Heb. xii.*

2. It was a painful, shameful, cursed death; he suffered the very pains of hell equivalently, yet he willingly submitted, *Isa. liii. 7. He opened not his mouth*, he opened his sides when the blood ran out, but he opened not his mouth in repining, his will was resolved into the will of his Father, *John xviii. 11. Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?* Now the more our wills are subject to God's will in affliction, the nearer we come to Christ our pattern; is it not our prayer we may be like Christ? by holy submission we imitate him: his will was melted into his father's will.

26. Consideration to submit our wills to God is the way to have our will; every one would be glad to have his will; the way to have our will is to resign it; God deals with us as we do with froward children; while we fret and quarrel, God will give us nothing, but when we are submissive, and say, *Thy will be done*, now God carves out mercy to us: the way to have our will is to submit it. *David* brought his will to God, *2 Sam. xv. 26. Here am I, let him do to me as seems good to him.* And after he resigned his will he had his will; God brought him back to the ark, and settled him again in his throne, *2 Sam. xix.* Many a parent that hath had a dear child sick, when he could bring his will to God to part with it, God hath given him the life of his child: there's nothing lost by referring our will to God, the Lord takes it kindly from us, and it is the only way to have our will.

27. and *ult.* Consideration, we may the more cheerfully surrender our souls to God when we die, when we have surrendered our wills to God while we live. Our blessed Saviour had

all along submitted his will to God, there was but one will between God the father and Christ. Now Christ in his life-time having given up his will to his father, at death he cheerfully gives up his soul to him, *Luke xxiii. 46. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* You that resign up your wills to God, may at the hour of death comfortably bequeath your souls to him.

II. The second means to bring our will to God in affliction is, *study the will of God.*

(1.) It is a *sovereign will*, he hath a supreme right and dominion over his creatures, to dispose of them as he pleaseth: a man may do with his own as he list, *Mat. xx. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* A man may cut his own timber as he will. God's sovereignty may cause submission, he may do with us as he sees good; God is not accountable to any creature for what he doth, *Job xxxiii. 13. He giveth not account of any of his matters.* Who shall call God to account? Who is higher than the highest? *Eccl. v. 8.* What man or angel dare summon God to his bar? *He giveth not account of any of his matters.* God will take an account of our carriage towards him, but he will give no account of his carriage towards us; God hath an absolute jurisdiction over us; the remembrance of this, God's will is a sovereign will, to do with us what he please, may silence all discontents, and charm down all unruly passions; we are not to dispute but to submit.

(2.) God's will is a wise will, he knows what is conducing to the good of his people, therefore submit, *Isa. xxx. 18. The Lord is a God of judgment*, that is, he is able to judge what is best for us; therefore rest in his wisdom, and acquiesce in his will; we rest in the wisdom of a physician, we are content he should scarify and let us blood, because he is judicious, and knows what is most conducive to our health: if the pilot be skilful, the passenger saith, *let him alone, he knows best how to steer the ship*; and shall we not rest in God's wisdom? Did we but study how wisely God steers all occurrences, and how he often brings us to heaven by a cross wind, it would much quiet our spirits, and make us say, *Thy will be done.* God's will is guided by wisdom; should God sometimes let us have our will, we would undo ourselves; did he let us carve for ourselves, we would choose the worst piece; *Lot* chose *Sodom* because well watered, and was as the garden of



of the Lord, *Gen. xiii. 10.* but God rained fire upon it out of heaven, *Gen. xix. 24.*

(3.) God's will is a just will, *Gen. xviii. 25.* *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* God's will is *regula & mensura*, it is the rule of justice; the wills of men are corrupt, therefore unfit to give law; but God's will is an holy and unerring will, which may cause submission, *Pf. xcvi. 2.* God may cross us, but he cannot wrong us; severe he may be, not unjust; therefore we must strike sail, and say, *Thy will be done.*

(4.) God's will is a good and gracious will, it promotes our interest; if it be God's will to afflict us, he shall make us say at last, it was good for us that we were afflicted. God's sail shall only thresh off our husks. That which is against our will shall not be against our profit; study what a good will God's is, and we will say, *fiat voluntas, thy will be done.*

(5.) God's will is an irresistible will; we may oppose it, but we cannot hinder it: the rising of the wave cannot stop the ship when it is in full sail; so the rising up of our will against God, cannot stop the execution of his will, *Rom. ix. 19.* *Who hath resisted his will?* Who can stay the chariot of the sun in its full career? Who can hinder the progress of God's will? Therefore it is in vain to contest with God, his will shall take place; there is no way to overcome God but by lying at his feet.

3. Means to submission to God in affliction is, get a gracious heart; all the rules and helps in the world will do but little good, till grace be infused; the bowl must have a good bias, or it will not run according to our desire; so till God put a new bias of grace into the soul, which inclines the will, it never submits to God; grace renews the will, and it must be renewed before it be subdued; grace teacheth self-denial, and we can never submit our will till we deny it.

4. Means, let us labour to have our covenant-interest cleared, to know that God is our God, *Pf. xlviii. 14.* *This God is our God.* He whose faith doth flourish into assurance, that can say, *God is his, will say, thy will be done.* A wicked man may say, *God hath laid this affliction upon me, and I cannot help it;* but a believer saith, *my God hath done it, and I will submit to it.* He who can call God his, knows God loves him as he loves Christ, and designs his salvation; therefore he will with *St. Paul* take pleasure in reproaches, *2 Cor. xii. 10.* And in eve-

ry adverse providence yield to God, as the wax to the impression of the seal.

5. Means to submission to God in affliction, get an humble spirit: a proud man will never stoop to God, he will rather break than bend; but when the heart is humble, the will is pliable. What a vast difference was there between *Pharaoh* and *Eli*? *Pharaoh* cries out, *who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* *Exod. v. 2.* But *Eli* saith, *it is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight,* *1 Sam. iii. 18.* See the difference between an heart that is swelled with pride, and that which is ballasted with humility; *Pharaoh* saith, *who is the Lord?* *Eli, it is the Lord.* An humble soul hath a deep sense of sin, he sees how he hath provoked God, he wonders he is not in hell; therefore, whatever God inflicts, he knows it is less than his iniquities deserve; this makes him say, *Lord, thy will be done.* O get into an humble posture, the will is never flexible till the heart be humble.

6. Means, get your heart loosened from things below; be crucified to the world: whence is children's frowardness, but when you take away their play-things? When we love the world, and God takes away these things from us, then we grow froward and unsubmitive to God's will. *Jonah* was exceeding glad of the gourd; and when God smote it, he grew froward, and because God had killed his gourd, kill me too, saith he, *Jonah iv. 8.* He who is a lover of the world, can never pray this prayer heartily, *thy will be done;* his heart boils with anger against God; and when the world is gone, his patience is gone too. Get mortified affections to these sublunary things.

7. Means for submission to God's will, get some good persuasion your sin is pardoned; *feri, Domine, feri, quia peccata mea condonata sunt;* finite, Lord, finite where thou wilt, said *Luther*, because my sins are pardoned; pardon of sin is a crowning blessing; hath God forgiven my sin, I will bear any thing, I will not murmur but admire; I will not complain of the burden of affliction, but bless God for removing the burden of sin: the pardoned soul saith this prayer heartily, *Thy will be done.* Lord use thy pruning knife, so long as thou wilt not come with thy bloody ax to hew me down.

8. Means, if we would have our wills submit to God, let us not look so much on the dark side of the cloud as the light side; that is, let

not look so much on the smart of affliction, as the good of affliction; 'tis bad to pore all on the smart, as 'tis bad for sore eyes to look too much on the fire; but we should look on the good of affliction; *Sampson* did not only look on the lion's carcase, but on the honey-comb within it, *Judges* xix. 8. *He turned to see the carcase of the lion, and behold, there was honey in the carcase.* Affliction is the frightful lion, but see what honey there is in it: affliction humbles, purifies, fills us with the consolations of God; here is honey in the belly of the lion; could we but look upon the benefit of affliction, stubbornness would be turned into submissiveness, and we should say, *thy will be done.*

9. Means, pray to God that he would calm our spirits, and conquer our wills. It is no easy thing to submit to God in affliction, there will be risings of the heart; therefore let us pray, that what God inflicts righteously, we may bear patiently. Prayer is the best spell or charm against impatience; prayer doth to the heart as *Christ* did to the sea, when it was tempestuous, he rebuked the wind, and there was a great calm; so, when the passions are up, and the will is apt to mutiny against God, prayer makes a gracious calm in the soul: prayer doth to the heart as the sponge doth to the cannon, when hot, cools it.

10. Means, if we would submit to God's will in affliction, let us make a good interpretation of God's dealings, take all God doth in the best

sense: we are apt to misconstrue God's dealings, and put a bad interpretation upon them, as *Israel*, *Numb.* xx. 4. *Ye have brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die there.* So God hath brought this affliction upon us, because he hates us, and intends to destroy us; and such hard thoughts of God cause silliness and stubbornness: O let us make a fair and candid interpretation of providence. Doth God afflict us? Say thus, perhaps he intends us mercy in this; he will try us whether we will love him in affliction; he is about to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; he smites the body, that he may save the soul. Could we put such a good meaning upon God's dealings, we should say, *thy will be done; let the righteous God smite me, and it shall be a kindness, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head*, *Pf. cxli. 5.*

11. and ult. Means, if you would submit to God in affliction, believe that the present condition is best for you. We are not competent judges; we fancy it is best to have ease and plenty, and have the rock pour out rivers of oil; but God sees affliction best; he sees our souls thrive best upon the bare common; the fall of the leaf is the spring of our grace. Could we believe the present condition is best, which God carves out to us, the quarrel would soon be at an end, and we should sit down satisfied with what God doth, and say, *thy will be done.* So much for this third petition.

## OF THE FOURTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 11. *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

**I**N this petition there are two things observable, I. The order. II. The matter.

I. The order. First we pray, *hallowed be thy name*, before, *Give us this day our daily bread.* Hence we learn, doct. *That the glory of God ought to be preferred before our own personal concerns.*

First we pray, *hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done*, before we pray, *give us this day our daily bread.* God's glory ought to weigh down all before it; it must be preferred before our dearest concerns; *Christ* preferred his Father's glory before his own glo-

ry as he was man, *John* viii. 49, 50. *I honour my Father, I seek not my own glory.* God's glory is that which is most dear to him; it is the apple of his eye; all his riches ly here. As *Micah* said, *Judges* xviii. 24. *What have I more?* So I may say of God's glory, what hath he more? God's glory is the most orient pearl of his crown, which he will not part with, *Isa.* xlii. 8. *My glory will I not give to another?* God's glory is more worth than heaven, more worth than the salvation of all mens souls; better kingdoms be demolished, better men and angels be annihilated, than God loseth any part of his glory.

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glory. First we pray that God's name may be hallowed and glorified before we pray, *give us our daily bread*. We are to prefer God's glory before our nearest concerns: before there can be a preferring God's glory before our private concerns, there must be a new birth wrought; the natural man seeks his own secular interest before God's glory, *John* iii. 31. *He is of the earth, earthly*. Let him have peace and trading, let the rock pour out rivers of oil, *Job* xxix. 6. and let God's glory go which way it will, he minds it not. A worm cannot flee and sing as a lark: a natural man, whose heart creeps upon the earth, cannot admire God, or advance his glory, as a man elevated by grace doth.

*Use*. Of trial. Do we prefer God's glory before our private concerns? doth God's glory take place? *Minus te amat qui aliquid tecum amat, quod non propter te amat*, Aug. 1. Do we prefer God's glory before our own credit? *Fama pari passu ambulat cum vita*. Credit is a jewel highly valued; like precious ointment, it casts a fragrant smell: but God's glory must be dearer than credit and applause: we must be willing to have our credit trampled upon, if God's glory may be raised higher, *Acts* v. 41. *The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*; that they were graced so far as to be disgraced for Christ. 2. Do we prefer God's glory before our relations? Relations are near, they are of our own flesh and bone; but God's glory must be dearer, *Luke* xiv. 26. *If any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he cannot be my disciple*. Here *odium in suos*, is *pietas in Deum*. If my friends (saith *Jerom*) should persuade me to deny Christ, if my wife should hang about my neck, if my mother should show me her breasts that gave me suck, I would trample upon all, and flee to Christ. 3. We must prefer God's glory before estate: gold is but shining dust, God's glory must weigh heavier. If it comes to this, I cannot keep my place of profit, but God's glory will be eclipsed; here I must rather suffer in my estate, than God's glory should suffer, *Heb*. x. 34. 4. We must prefer God's glory before our life, *Rev*. xii. 11. *They loved not their own lives to the death*. *Ignatius* called his fetters his spiritual jewels, he wore them as a chain of pearl. *Cordius* the martyr said, it is to my loss, if you bate me any thing of my sufferings. This argues grace *crefcent*, and elevated in an high degree. Who but a soul inflamed in love to God, can set God high-

est on the throne, and prefer him above all private concerns?

II. The second thing in the petition, is the matter of it. *Give us this day our daily bread*. The sum of this petition is, that God would give us such a competency in these outward things, as he sees most expedient for us: It is much like that prayer of *Agur*, *Prov*. xxx. 8. *Feed me with food convenient for me*; give me a *viaticum*, a bait by the way, enough to bear my charges till I come to heaven, and it sufficeth. Let me explain the words, *Give us this day our daily bread*. [*Give*] Hence note, that the good things of this life are the gifts of God; he is the donor of all our blessings, *Give us*: not only faith is the gift of God, but food; not only daily grace is from God, but *daily bread*; every good thing comes from God, *James* i. 17. *Every good gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights*. Wisdom is the gift of God, *Isa*. xxviii. 26. *His God doth instruct him to discretion*. Riches are the gift of God, *2 Chron*. i. 12. *I will give thee riches*. Peace is the gift of God, *Pf*. cxlvii. 14. *He makes peace in thy borders*. Health which is the cream of life, is the gift of God, *Jer*. xxx. 17. *I will restore health to thee*. Rain is the gift of God, *Job* v. 10. *Who giveth rain on the earth*. All comes from God; he makes the corn to grow, and the herbs to flourish.

*Use* I. See our own poverty and indigence: we live all upon alms, and upon free gift, *give us this day*. All we have is from the hand of God's royal bounty: we have nothing but what God gives us out of his storehouse; we cannot have one bit of bread but from God. The devil persuaded our first parents, that, by disobeying God, they should be as gods, *Gen*. v. 3. but we may now see what goodly gods we are, that we have not a bit of bread to put in our mouths, unless God give it us: here is an humbling consideration.

*Branch* 2. Is all a gift? Then we are to seek every mercy from God by prayer, *Give us this day*. The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. Whatever we have, if it do not come in the way of prayer, it doth not come in the way of love; 'tis given, as *Israel's* quails, in anger. If every thing be a gift, we do not deserve it, we are not fit for it, unless we ask for his alms. And must we go to God for every mercy? How wicked are they, who instead of going to God for food when they want, they go to the devil, they make a compact

past with him; and if he will help them to a livelihood, they will give him their souls? Better starve, than go to the devil for provender. I with there be none in our age guilty of this, who when they are in want, use indirect means for a livelihood; they consult with witches who are the devil's oracles: the end of these will be fearful, as that of *Saul* was, whom the Lord is said to have killed, because he asked counsel at a familiar spirit.

3. If all be a gift, then it is not a debt, we cannot say to God, as that creditor said, *Mat. xviii. 28. Pay me what thou owest*. Who can make God a debtor, or do any act that is obliging and meritorious? Whatever we receive from God is a gift; we can give nothing to God but what he hath given us, *1 Chron. xxix. 14. All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*. David and his people offered to the building of God's house gold and silver, but they offered nothing but what God had given them, *of thine own have we given thee*. If we love God, God it is that hath given us an heart to love him: if we praise him, he both gives us the organ of the tongue, and puts it in tune: if we give alms to others, God hath given alms to us first, so that we may say, *we offer, O Lord, of thine own to thee*. Is all of gift, how absurd then is the doctrine of merit? That was a proud speech of a friar, that said, *redde mihi Vitam Aeternam quam debes*; give me, Lord, eternal life which thou owest me. We cannot deserve a bit of bread, much less a crown of glory. If all be a gift, then merit is exploded, and shut out of doors.

4. If all be a gift, *give us this day*, then take notice of God's goodness: there is nothing in us can deserve or requite God's kindness; yet such is the sweetness of his nature, he gives us rich provision, and feeds us with the finest of the wheat. *Pindar* saith, it was an opinion of the people of *Rhodes*, that *Jupiter* rained down gold upon the city. God hath rained down golden mercies upon us; he is upon the giving hand. Observe three things in God's giving;

(1.) He is not weary of giving; the springs of mercy are ever running. God did not only dispense blessings in former ages, but he still gives gifts to us; as the sun not only enriches the world with its morning-light, but keeps light for the meridian. The honey-comb of God's bounty is still dropping.

(2.) God delights in giving, *Micah vii. 18.*

*He delighteth in mercy*. As the mother delights to give the child the breast, God loves we should have the breast of mercy in our mouth.

(3.) God gives to his very enemies. Who will send in provisions to his enemy? Men use to spread nets for their enemies, God spreads a table. The dew drops on the thistle as well as the rose; the dew of God's bounty drops upon the worst. Those who have their mouths opened against God, yet God puts bread in those mouths. O the royal bounty of God! *Psf. lii. 1. The goodness of God endureth continually*. Swinish sinners God puts jewels upon, and feeds them every day.

5. If all be gift, see then the odious ingratitude of men, who sin against their giver. God feeds them, and they fight against him; he gives them their bread, and they give him affronts. How unworthy is this? Would we not cry, shame of him, who had a friend always feeding him with money, and he should betray and injure that friend. Thus ungratefully do sinners deal with God, they do not only forget his mercies, but abuse them, *Jer. v. 7. When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery*. O how horrid is this, to sin against a bountiful God? to strike (as it were) those hands that relieve us! this gives a dye and tincture to mens sins, and make them crimson. How many make a dart of God's mercies, and shoot at him? He gives them wit, and they serve the devil with it; he gives them strength, and they waste it among harlots; he gives them bread to eat, and they lift up the heel against him, *Deut. xxxii. 15. Jesurun waxed fat, and kicked*. These are like *Abraham*, who, as soon as *David* his father kissed him, plotted treason against him, *2 Sam. xv. 10*. Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk. These who sin against their giver, and abuse God's royal favours, the mercies of God will come in as witnesses against them. What smoother than oyl? But if it be heated, what more scalding? What sweeter than mercy? But if it be abused, what more dreadful? It turns to fury.

6. If God gives us all, let God's giving excite us to thanksgiving; he is the founder and donor of all our blessings, let him have all our acknowledgments. *All the rivers come from the sea. And thither they return again. Eccl. i. 7.* All our gifts come from God, and to him must all our praises return. We are apt to burn in-



*cense to our own drag*, Hab. i. 16. To attribute all we have to our own second causes.

(1.) Our own skill and industry. God is the giver; he gives daily bread, *Pf. cxxxvi. 35.* he gives riches, *Deut. viii. 18.* *He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.*

Or, (2.) We oft ascribe the praise to second causes, and forget God. If friends have bestowed an estate to look at them and admire them, but not God who is the great giver: as if one should be thankful to the steward, and never take notice of the master of the family, that provides all. O if God gives all, our eye-sight, our food, our clothing, let us sacrifice the chief praise to him; let not God be a loser by his mercies. Praise is a more illustrious part of God's Worship. Our wants may send us to prayer, nature may make us beg daily bread; but it shows an heart full of ingenuity and grace, to be rendering praises to God. In petition we act like men, in praise we act like angels. Doth God sow seeds of mercy? Let thankfulness be the crop we bring forth. We are called the temples of God, *1 Cor. iii. 16.* and where should God's praises be sounded forth, but in his temples? *Pf. cxlvi. 2.* *While I live will I bless the Lord, I will sing praises to my God while I have any being.* God gives us daily bread, let us give him daily praise. Thankfulness to our donor is the best policy; there is nothing lost by it: to be thankful for one mercy, is the way to have more. Musicians love to sound their trumpets where there is best echo, and God loves to bestow his mercies where there is the best echo of praise: and it is not only offering the calves of our lips is enough, but we must show our thankfulness by improving the gifts which God gives us, and as it were putting them out to use. God gives us an estate, and we honour the Lord with our substance, *Prov. iii. 9.* he gives us the staff of bread, and we lay out the strength we receive by it in his service: this is to be thankful; and that we may be thankful, be humble. Pride stops the current of gratitude: a proud man will never be thankful; he looks upon all he hath, either to be of his own procuring or deserving. Let us see all we have is God's gift, and how unworthy we are to receive the least favour; and this will make us much in doxology and gratitude, we will be silver trumpets sounding forth God's praise.

First, *Give,*] Hence I note, 1. That the good things of this life are the gifts of God; he is

the founder and donor. 2. From this word *give*, I note, that it is not unlawful to pray for temporal things; we may pray for daily bread, *Prov. xxx. 8.* *Feed me with food convenient for me*: we may pray for health, *Pf. vi. 2.* *O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.* As these are in themselves good. This, so they are useful for us; they are as needful for preserving the comfort of life, as the oil is needful for preserving the lamp from going out. Only let me insert two things.

1. There is a great difference between our praying for temporal things and spiritual. In praying for spiritual things, we must be absolute; when we pray for pardon of sin, and the favour of God, and the sanctifying graces of the spirit, these are indispensibly necessary to salvation, and here we must take no denial: but when we pray for temporal things, here our prayers must be limited, we must pray conditionally so far as God sees good for us. God sometimes sees cause to withhold temporal things from us: they may be snares, and draw our hearts from God; therefore we must pray for these things with submission to God's will. This was *Israel's* sin; they would be peremptory and absolute in their desire of temporal things: God's bill of fear did not please them, they must have dainties, *Numb. xi. 18.* *Who shall give us flesh to eat?* God hath given hem manna, he fed them with a miracle from heaven, but their wanton palates craved more, they must have quails; God let them have their desire, but they had sower sawce to their quails, *Pf. lxxviii. 31.* *While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew them.* Rachel was importunate in her desires for a child, *Gen. xxx. 1.* *Give me children, or I die*: God let her have a child, but it was a *Benoni*, a son of sorrow, it cost her her life in bringing forth, *Gen. xxxv. 18.* We must pray for outward things with submission to God's will, else they come in anger.

2. When we pray for things pertaining to this life, we must desire temporal things for spiritual ends; we must desire these things to be as helps in our journey to heaven. If we pray for health, it must be that we may improve this talent of health for God's glory, and may be fitter for his service; if we pray for a competency of estate, it must be for an holy end, that we may be kept from the temptations which poverty usually exposeth to; and that we may be in a better capacity to sow the golden

golden seeds of charity, and relieve such as are in want. *Temporal things must be prayed for, for spiritual ends.* Hannah prayed for a child, and it was for this end, that her child might be devoted to God, 1 Sam. i. 11. *O Lord, if thou wilt remember me, and wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.* Many pray for outward things only to gratify their sensual appetite; *the ravens cry for food*, Ps. cxlvii. 9. To pray for outward things only to satisfy nature, is to cry rather like ravens than christians. We must have an higher end in our prayers, we must aim at heaven, while we are praying for earth. And must we pray for temporal things for spiritual ends, that we may be fitter to seek God? Then, how wicked are they, who beg temporal mercies that they may be more enabled to sin against God? James iv. 3. *Ye ask, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* One man is sick, and he prays for health, that he may be among his cups and harlots: another prays for an estate; he would not only have his belly filled, but his barns: and why would he be rich, that he may raise his name, or that, having more power in his hand, he may now take a fuller revenge on his enemies? This is impiety joined with impudence; to pray to God to give us temporal things, that we may be the better enabled to serve the devil.

*Use.* If we are to pray for temporal good things, then how much more for spiritual? If we are to pray for bread, then, how much more for the bread of life? if for oil, then, how much for the oil of gladness? If we pray to have our hunger satisfied, much more should we pray to have our souls saved. Alas! what if God should hear our prayers, and grant us these temporal things, and no more, what were we the better? What is it to have food, and want grace? What is it to have the back clothed, and the soul naked; to have a south land, and want the living springs in Christ's blood; what comfort could that be? O therefore let us be earnest for spiritual mercies; Lord do not only feed me, but sanctify me; rather an heart full of grace, than an house full of gold: if we are to pray for daily bread, the things of this life, much more for the things of the life that is to come.

3. From the word *give*, I note, that they who God hath given a large measure of outward things to, yet must pray, *Give us daily bread.* And this may answer a question.

Qu. *Some may say, we have an estate already, and what need we pray, Give us daily bread?*

Ans. Supposing we have a plentiful estate, yet we need make this petition, *Give us bread*; and that upon a double account,

(1.) That we may have a blessing upon our food, and all that we enjoy, Ps. cxxxii. 5. *I will bless her provision. Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of God's mouth*, Mat. iv. 4. What is that but a word of blessing? Though the bread is in our hand, yet the blessing is in God's hand, and it must be fetched out of his hand by prayer: Well therefore may rich men pray, *Give us our bread*, let it be seasoned with a blessing. If God should withhold a blessing, nothing we have would do us good; our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, Ps. cvi. 15. *He gives them their request, but sent leanness into their soul*; that is, they pined away, and their meat did not nourish them. If God should withhold a blessing, what we eat would turn to bad humours, and hasten death. If God do not bless our riches, they will do us more hurt than good, Eccl. v. 13. *Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.* So that, granting we have plentiful estates, yet we had need pray, *Give us our bread*; let us have a blessing with what we have.

(2.) Though we have estates, yet we had need pray, *give*, that we may hereby engage God to continue these comforts to us. How many casualties may fall out? How many have had corn in their barn, and a fire hath come on a sudden and consumed all? How many have had losses at sea, and great estates boiled away to nothing? Ruth i. 21. *I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.* Therefore, though we have estates, yet we had need pray, *give us*, Lord, give a continuance of these comforts, that they may not, before we are aware, take wings and fly from us. So much for this first word in the petition, *give*.

Secondly, *us.*] *Give us.*

Qu. *Why do we pray here in the plural? Why give us? Why is it not said, give me?*

Ans. To show that we are to have publick spirits in prayer; we must not only pray for ourselves, but others; both the law of God, and the law of love bind us to this, *we must love our neighbour as ourselves*; therefore we must pray for them as well as ourselves. Every good Christian hath a fellow-feeling of the wants and



and miseries of others, and he prays that God would extend his bounty to them, especially, he prays for the saints, *Eph. vi. 18. Praying always for all saints.* These are children of the family.

*Use I.* Should we have publick spirits in prayer, *give us?* It reproves such narrow-spirited men as move only within their own sphere; they look only at themselves, but mind not the case of others; they leave others out of their prayers; if they have daily bread, they care not though others starve; if they are clothed, they care not though others go naked. Christ hath taught us to pray for others, *give us*; but selfish persons are shut up within themselves, as the snail in the shell, and never speak a word in prayer for others: these have no commiseration or pity; they are like *Judas*, whose bowels fell out.

*Use II.* Let us pray for others, as well as for ourselves, *give us: vir bonus aliis prodest æque ac sibi.* Spiders work only for themselves, but bees work for the good of others; the more excellent any thing is, the more it operates for the good of others. The springs refresh others with their chrystal streams; the sun enlightens others with its golden beams: the more a Christian is enobled with grace, the more he besiegeth heaven with his prayers for others; if we are members of the body mystical, we cannot but have a sympathy with others in their wants, and this sympathy sets us a-praying for them: *David* had a public spirit in prayer, *Pf. cxxv. 4. Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good*; though he begins the psalm with prayer for himself, *Pf. li. 1. Have mercy upon me, O God*; yet he ends the psalm with prayer for others, *v. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion.*

*Use III.* It is matter of comfort to the godly, who are but low in the world, yet they have the prayers of God's people for them; they pray not only for the increase of their faith, but their food, that God will give them *daily bread.* He is like to be rich, who hath several stocks going; so they are in a likely way to thrive, who have the prayers of the saints going for them in several parts of the world. So much for this second word in the petition, *Give us.*

*Thirdly,* The third word in the petition is, *This day.* We pray not, Give us bread for a month, or a year, but a day; *Give us this day.*

*Qu. Is it not lawful to lay up for afterwards?*

*Doth not the apostle say,* He who provides not for his family, is worse than an infidel, *1 Tim. v. 8.*

*Ans.* It is true, it is lawful to lay up for posterity; but our Saviour hath taught us to pray, *Give us this day our bread,* for two reasons;

(1.) That we should not have carking care for the future. We should not set our wits upon the tenter, or torment ourselves how to lay up great estates; if we do *vivere in diem*, if we have but enough to supply for the present, it may suffice; *Give us this day: take no thought for to morrow*, *Matth. vi. 34.* God fed *Israel* with manna in the wilderness, and he fed them from hand to mouth; sometimes all their manna was spent; and if any one had asked them where they would have their breakfast next morning, they would have said, our care is only for *this day*, God will rain down what manna we need: if we have bread *this day*, do not distrust God's providence for the future.

(2.) Our Saviour will have us pray, *Give us bread this day*, to teach us to live every day as if it were our last. We are not to pray, give us bread to morrow, because we do not know whether we shall live while to morrow; but, Lord, give us *this day*; it may be our last day we shall live, and then we shall need no more.

*Use.* If we pray for bread only for a day, *Give us this day*, then you who have great estates have cause to be thankful; you have more than you pray for: you pray but for one day, and God hath given you enough to suffice you all your life. What a bountiful God do you serve! two things may make rich men thankful; 1. God gives them more than they deserve. 2. God gives them more than they pray for.

*Fourthly,* The fourth thing in the petition is, *Our bread.*

*Qu. Why is it called our bread, when it is not ours, but God's?*

*Ans.* 1. We must understand it in a qualified sense; it is our bread, being gotten by honest industry. There are two sorts of bread that cannot properly be called *our bread.* (1.) The bread of idleness. (2.) The bread of violence.

(1.) The bread of idleness, *Prov. xxxi. 27. She eateth not the bread of Idleness.* An idle person doth *vivere aliena quadra*, he lives at another body's cost, and is at their finding, *Prov. i. 25. His hands refuse to labour.* We must not be as the drones which eat the honey that other bees have brought into the hive:

if

if we eat the bread of idleness, this is not our own bread, 2 *Theff.* iii. 11, 12. *There are some that walk disorderly, working not at all; such we command that they work, and eat their own bread.* The apostle gives this hint, that such as live idly do not eat their own bread.

(2.) The bread of violence. We cannot call this *our bread*, for it is taken away from others: that which is gotten by stealth or fraud, or any manner of extortion, is not *our bread*, it belongs to another. He who is a bird of prey, who takes away the bread of the widow and fatherless, he eats that bread which is none of his, nor can he pray for a blessing upon it: can he pray God to bless that which he hath gotten unjustly?

2. It is called our bread, by virtue of our title to it. There is a twofold title to bread. (1.) A spiritual title: in and by Christ we have a right to the creature, and may call it, *our bread*. As we are believers, we have the best title to the earthly things, we hold all *in capite*, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22. *All things are yours*: by what title, *ye are Christ's*. (2.) A civil title, which the law confers on us: to deny men a civil right to their possessions, and make all common, it opens the door to anarchy and confusion.

*Use.* See the privilege of believers, they have both a spiritual and civil right to what they possess: they who can say, *our father*, can say, *our bread*. Wicked men, though they have a legal right to what they possess, yet not a covenant-right; they have it by providence, not by promise; with God's leave, not with his love. Wicked men are in God's eye no better than usurpers; all they have, their money and land, is like cloth taken up at the drapers, which is not paid for; but this is the sweet privilege of believers, they can say, *our bread*; Christ being theirs, all is theirs. O how sweet is every bit of bread dipped in Christ's blood! How well doth that meat relish, which is a pledge and earnest of more! The meal in the barrel is an earnest of our angels food in paradise. Here is the privilege of saints, they have a right to the earth and heaven.

*Fifthly*, The fifth and last thing in this petition is, the thing we pray for, *daily bread*.]

*Qu. What is meant by bread?*

*Ans.* Bread here, by a synecdoche, *speciei pro genere*, is put for all the temporal blessings of this life, food, fewel, clothing. *Quicquid nobis conducit ad bene esse*, Austin. Whatever may serve for necessity or sober delight.

*Use.* Learn to be contented with that allowance God gives us. If we have bread, a competency of these outward things, let us rest satisfied. We pray but for bread, *Give our daily bread*; we do not pray for superfluities, not for quails or venison, but for bread, that which may support life. Though we have not so much as others, so full a crop, so rich an estate, yet if we have the staff of bread to shore us from falling, let us be content. Most people are herein faulty: though they pray that God would give them bread (so much as he sees expedient for them) yet they are not content with God's allowance, but overgreedily covet more, and with the daughters of the horse-leech, cry, *give, give*, *Prov.* xxx. 15. This is a vice naturally ingrafted in us. Many pray *Agur's* first prayer, *give me not poverty*, but few pray his last prayer, *give me not riches*, *Prov.* xxx. 8. They are not content with *daily bread*, but have the dry-drop of covetousness; they are still craving for more, *Hab.* ii. 5. *Who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied. There are (saith Solomon) four things say, it is not enough, Prov.* xxx. 15. *the grave, the barren womb, the earth, the fire*: and I may add a fifth thing, the heart of a covetous man. Such as are not content with daily bread, but thirst insatiably after more, will break over the hedge of God's command; and to get riches, will sicken at no sin. *Cui nihil satis est, eidem nihil turpe*, Tacitus. Therefore covetousness is called a radical vice, 1 *Tim.* vi. 10. *The root of all evils. Quid non mortalia pectora cogit, auri sacra fames?* The Greek word for covetousness *pleonexia*, signifies an inordinate desire of getting. Covetousness is not only the getting riches unjustly, but in loving them inordinately: this is a key opens the door to all sin. It causeth, 1. Theft: *Achan's* covetous humour made him steal that wedge of gold which cleft asunder his soul from God, *Josh.* vii. 21. (2.) It causeth treason. What made *Judas* betray Christ? It was the thirty pieces of silver, *Mat.* xxvi. 15. (3.) It produceth murder. It was the inordinate love of the vineyard, made *Achab* conspire *Naboth's* death, 1 *Kings* xxi. 13. (4.) It is the root of perjury, 2 *Tim.* iii. 3. Men shall be *covetous*; and it follows, *truce-breakers*. Love of silver will make men take a false oath, and break a just oath. (5.) It is the spring of apostacy, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world.* He did not only forsake

*Paul's*



Paul's company, but his doctrine. Demas afterward became a priest in an idol temple, saith *Dorotheus*. (6.) Covetousness will make men idolaters, *Col. iii. 5.* Covetousness which is idolatry. Though the covetous man will not worship graven images in the church, yet he will worship the graven image in his coin. 7. Covetousness makes men give themselves to the devil. Pope *Sylvester II.* did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom. Covetous persons forget this prayer. Give us daily bread, that which may satisfy nature, but they are insatiable in their desire. O let us take heed of this dry-dropsy, *Heb. xiii. 5.* Be content with such things as ye have. *Natura parvo demittitur*, *Senec.* That we may be content with daily bread, that which God in his providence carves out to us, and not covet or murmur; let me propose these things,

1. God can bless a little, *Exod. xxiii. 24.* He will bless thy bread, and thy water. A blessing puts sweetness into the least morsel of bread, it is like sugar in wine, *Pf. cxxii. 15.* I will bless her provision. *Daniel*, and the three children ate pulse, (which was a coarse fare) yet, they looked fairer than those which did eat of the king's meat, *Dan. i. 15.* Whence was this? God did infuse more than an ordinary blessing into the pulse: God's blessing is better than the king's venison: a piece of bread with God's love is angels food.

2. God, who gives us our allowance, knows what quantity of these outward things is fittest for us: a smaller provision may be fitter for some; bread may be better than dainties; every one cannot bear an high condition, no more than a weak brain can bear heady wine. Hath one a larger proportion of worldly things? God sees he can better manage such a condition, he can order his affairs with discretion, which perhaps another cannot; as he hath a large estate, so he hath a large heart to do good, which perhaps another hath not; this should make us content with a shorter bill of fare: God's wisdom is that we acquiesce in, he sees what is best for every one: that which is good for one, may be bad for another.

3. In being contented with daily bread, that which God carves to us, though it be a lesser piece, much grace is seen in this; all the graces act their part in a contented soul. As the holy ointment was made up of several spices, myrrhe, cinnamon, cassia, *Exod. xxx. 23.* So, contentment hath in it a mixture of several

graces; there is faith, a Christian believes, God doth all for the best; and love, which thinks no evil, but takes all God doth in good part; and patience, submitting cheerfully to what God orders wisely: God is much pleased to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised, like so many bright stars shining in a constellation.

4. To be content with daily bread, the allowance God gives, though but sparingly, doth keep us from many temptations, which discontented persons fall into when the devil sees a person just of *Israel's* humour, not content with manna, but must have quails, saith *Satan*, here is good fishing for me. *Satan* oft tempts discontented ones to murmuring, and to unlawful means, cozening and defrauding; and he who increaseth an estate by indirect means stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will ly very uneasy when he comes to die: if you would be freed from the temptations which discontent exposeth to, be content with such things as ye have, bless God for daily bread.

5. What a rare and admirable thing is it to be content with daily bread, though it be coarse and though there be but little of it! a christian, though he hath but a *viaticum*, a little meal in the barrel, yet he hath that which gives him content: what he hath not in the cupboard, he hath in the promise; that bit of bread he hath, is with the love of God, and that sawce makes it relish sweet, that little oil in the cruse is a pledge and earnest of those dainties he shall taste of in the kingdom of God, this makes him content: what a rare and wonderful thing is this! it is no wonder to be content in heaven, when we are at the fountain-head, and have all things we can desire; but to be content when God keeps us to short commons, and we have scarce daily bread, this is a wonder: when grace is crowning, it is no wonder to be content; but when grace is conflicting with straits, now to be content is a glorious thing indeed, and deserves the garland of praise.

6. To make us content with daily bread, though God straitens us in our allowance, think seriously of the danger that is in an high prosperous condition: some are not content with daily bread, but desire to have their barns filled, and heap up silver as dust; this proves a snare to them, *1 Tim. vi. 10.* They that will be rich fall into a snare. Pride, idleness, wantonness, are the three worms that usually breed of plenty. Prosperity oft deafens the ear against God, *Jer.*

**XX. 21.** *If I prosper, thou wilt say, I will not hear.* Soft pleasures harden the heart. In the body, the more fat, the less blood in the veins, and the less spirits; the more outward plenty, often the less piety. Prosperity hath its honey, and also its sting: prosperity like the full of the moon, makes many lunatic. The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. Anxious care is the *malus genius*, the evil spirit that haunts the rich man, and will not let him be quiet: when his chests are full of money, his heart is full of care, either how to manage or how to encrease, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorseth. Should not this make us content with what allowance God gives, if we have daily bread, though not dainties? Think of the danger of prosperity: the spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare; many have been sunk to hell with golden weights. The ferry-man takes in all passengers, that he may increase his fare, and sometimes to the sinking of the boat, 1 *Tim. vi. 9.* *They that would be rich fall into many hurtful lusts, which drown them in perdition.* The world's golden sands are quicksands; this may make us take our daily bread, though it be but coarse, contentedly: what if we have less food, we have less snare; if less dignity, less danger: if we want the rich provisions of the world, so we want the temptations.

7. If God keeps us to a spare diet, if he gives us less temporals, he hath made it up in spirituals; he hath given us the pearl of price, and the holy anointing. (1.) The pearl of price, the Lord Jesus, he is the quintessence of all good things. To give us Christ, is more than if God had given us all the world. God can make more worlds, but he hath no more Christs to bestow: he is such a golden mine that the angels cannot dig to the bottom, *Eph. iii. 8.* From Christ we may have justification, adoption, coronation. The sea of God's mercy in giving us Christ (saith *Luther*) should swallow up all our wants. (2.) The holy unction; God hath anointed us with the graces of his spirit. Grace is a seed of God, a blossom of eternity; the graces are the impressions of the divine nature, stars to enlighten us, spices to perfume us, diamonds to enrich us; and if God hath adorned the hidden man of the heart with these sacred jewels, it may well make us content, though we have but short commons, and that coarse too. God hath given his peo-

ple better things than corn and wine; he hath given them that which he cannot give in anger, and which cannot stand with reprobation, and they may say as *David*, *Ps. xvi. 6.* *The lines are fallen to them in pleasant places; and have a goodly heritage.* I have read of *Didimus* and *Anthony*, *Didimus* was a blind man, but very holy; *Anthony* asked him if he was not troubled for the want of his eyes, he told him he was: why (saith *Anthony*) are you troubled, you want that which flies and birds have, when you have that which angels have? So I say to Christians, if God hath not given you the purse, he hath given you his spirit; if you want that which rich men have, God hath given you that which angels have, and are you not content?

8. If you have but daily bread enough to suffice nature, be content. Consider it is not having abundance makes the life always comfortable; it is not a great cage will make the bird sing: a competency may breed contentment, when having more, they make one less content: a staff may help the traveller, but a bundle of staves will be a burden to him. A great estate may be like a long trailing garment, more burdensome than useful. Many that have great incomes and revenues have not so much comfort in their lives, as some that go to their hard labour.

9. If you have less daily bread, you will have less account to give. The riches and honours of this world, like Alchemy, make a great show, and, with their glistering, dazzle mens eyes; but they do not consider the great account they must give to God, *Luke xvi. 2.* *Give an account of thy stewardship.* What good hast thou done with thy estate? hast thou, as a good steward, traded thy golden talents for God's glory? Hast thou honoured the Lord with thy substance? The greater revenues, the greater reckonings: this may quiet and content us, if we have but little daily bread, our account will be less.

10. You that have but a small competency in these outward things, your provisions are short, yet you may be content to consider how much you look for hereafter: God keeps the best wine till last. What though now you have a small pittance, and are fed from hand to mouth? You look for an eternal reward, white robes, sparkling crowns, rivers of pleasure. A son is content though his father gives him but now and then a little money, as long as he expects his father should settle all his land upon him



him at last ; if God give you but a little present, yet you look for that glory which eye hath not seen : may not you be content ? The world is but a *diversorium*, a great inn : if God give you sufficient to pay for your charges in your inn, you may be content, you shall have enough when you come to your own country.

*Qu. How may we be content, though God cut us short in these externals ; though we have but little daily bread and coarse ?*

*Ans.* 1. Think with ourselves, some have been much lower than we, who have been better than we. *Jacob*, an holy Patriarch, goes over *Jordan* with his staff, and lived in a mean condition a long time ; he had the clouds for his canopy, and stone for his pillow. *Moses* that might have been rich, some historians say, *Pharaoh's* daughter adopted him for her son, because king *Pharaoh* had no heir, and so *Moses* was like to have come to the crown, yet leaving

the honours of the court, in what a low mean condition did he live in, when he went to *Jethro* his father-in-law ? *Musculus*, famous for learning and piety, was put to great straits, he was put to dig in a town-ditch, and had scarce daily bread, yet content. Nay, Christ, who was heir of all, yet for our sakes became poor, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Let all these examples make us content.

2. Let us labour to have the interest cleared between God and our souls. He who can say, *My God*, hath enough to rock his heart quiet in the lowest condition : what can he want who hath *El-Shaddai*, the all-sufficient God for his portion ? Though the nethersprings fail, yet he hath the uppersprings : though the bill of fare grow short, yet an interest in God is a pillar of support to us, and we may, with *David*, encourage ourselves in the Lord our God.

## OF THE FIFTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

**B**Efore I speak strictly to the words, I shall take notice, 1. That in this prayer there is but one petition for the body, *Give us our daily bread*, but two petitions for the soul, *Forgive us our trespasses, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*: Hence observe, that we are to be more careful for our *souls*, than for our *bodies* : more careful for grace than for daily bread ; more desirous to have our souls saved, than our bodies fed. In the law, the weight of the sanctuary was twice as big as the common weight, to typify that spiritual things must be of far greater weight with us than earthly. The excellency of the soul may challenge our chief care about it.

1. The soul is an *immaterial* substance ; it is an heavenly spark, lighted by the breath of God. It is the more refined spiritual part of man, it is of an angelical nature ; it hath some faint resemblance of God. The body is the more dreggish part, it is but the cabinet, which, though curiously wrought, the soul is the jewel ; the soul is near a-kin to angels, it is *capax beatitudinis*, capable of communion with God in glory.

2. It is *immortal* ; it doth never expire. It can act without the body ; though the body dissolve into dust, the soul lives, *Luke* xii. 4. The essence of the soul is eternal, it hath a beginning, but no end ; it is a blossom of eternity. Sure, then, if the soul be so enobled and dignified, more care should be taken about the soul than the body. We make but one petition for the body, but two petitions for the soul.

*Use* 1. It reproves them that take *more care for their bodies*, than their *souls*. The body is but the brutish part, yet they take more care, 1. About *dress*ing their bodies, than their souls. They put on their best clothes, are dressed in the richest garb, but care not how naked or undrest their souls are ; they do not get the jewels of grace, to adorn their inner-man. 2. About *feeding* their bodies, than their souls, they are caterers for the flesh, they do make provision for the flesh, *Rom.* xiii. 14. they have the best diet, but let their souls starve ; as if one should feed his hawk, but let his child starve. The body must sit in the *chair of state*, but the soul, that princely thing, is made a lacky to run on the devil's errand.

-----*Omnia si perdas animam servare memento.*

If it be well with the soul, it shall be well with the body. If the soul be *gracious*, the body shall be *glorious*, for it shall shine like *Christ's* body. Therefore it is wisdom to look chiefly to the soul, because in saving the soul, we secure the happiness of the body. And we cannot shew our care for the soul more than in taking *all seasons* for our souls; reading, praying, hearing, meditating. O look to the *main chance*, let the soul be chiefly tended; the loss of the soul would be *fatal*; other losses may be made up again. If one loseth his health, he may recover it again; if he lose his estate, he may get it up again; but if he lose his soul, this loss can never be made up again. The merchant that ventures all he hath in one ship, if that ship be lost, he is quite broken.

2. From the *connexion* in the text, as soon as Christ had said, give us *daily bread*, he adds, *and forgive us*. Christ joins this petition of *Forgiveness of sin*, immediately to the other of *daily bread*, to show us, that though we have *daily bread*, yet all is nothing without forgiveness. If our sins be not pardoned, we can take but little comfort in our food. As it is with a man that is condemned, though you bring him meat in prison, yet he takes little comfort in it without a pardon; so, though we have *daily bread*, yet it will do us no good unless sin be forgiven. What though we should have *manna* which was called *angels food*, tho' the rock should pour out rivers of oil, *Jeb xxix.* 6. all is nothing unless sin be done away. When Christ had said, Give us our *daily bread*, he presently adds, *and forgive us our trespasses*. Daily bread may satisfy the appetite, but forgiveness of sin satisfies the conscience.

*Use 1.* It condemns the folly of most people: if they have *daily bread*, the delicious things of this life, they look no further, they are not solicitous for the pardon of sin; if they have that which feeds them, they look not after that which should crown them. Alas! you may have *daily bread*, and yet perish. The rich man in the gospel had *daily bread*, nay, he had *dainties*, he fared *deliciously every day*, but in *hell* he *lift up his eyes*, Luke xvi, 19.

*Use 2.* Let us pray, that God would not give us our portion in this life, that he would not put us off with *daily bread*, but that he would give forgiveness. This is the sauce that would

make our bread relish the sweeter. A speech of Luther, *valde protestatus sum me nolle sic futiari ab illo*. I did solemnly protest, that God should not put me off with outward things. Be *not content* with that which is common to the brute creatures, the Dog or elephant, to have your hunger satisfied, but, besides *daily bread*, get *pardon of sin*. A drop of Christ's blood, a dram of forgiving mercy, is infinitely more valuable than all the delights under the sun. Daily bread may make us live comfortably, but forgiveness of sin will make us die comfortably. So I come to the words of the petition, *forgive us our debts, &c.*

1. Here is a term given to sin, it is a debt.

2. The confessing the debt, *our debt*. \*3. A prayer, *forgive us*. 4. A condition on which we desire forgiveness, *as we forgive our debtors*.

I shall speak of the term given to sin, it is a *debt*. That which is here called a *debt* is called *sin*, Luke xi. 4. *Forgive us our sins*. So then *sin* is a *debt*, and every sinner is a *debtor*. Sin is compared to a *debt* of ten thousand talents, *Matth xviii.* 24.

1. Why is sin called a *debt*? 2. Wherein sin is worse than other *debts* we contract? 3. Wherein sinners have the property of bad *debtors*?

Qu. 1. *Why is sin called a debt?*

Ans. Because it so fitly resembles it.

1. A debt ariseth upon non-payment of money, or the not paying that which is one's due. So we owe to God exact obedience, and not paying what is due, thus we come to be in debt. 2. As in case of non-payment, the debtor goes to prison; so, by our sin, we become guilty, and stand obliged to God's curse of damnation. Though God doth a while grant a sinner a *reprieve*, yet he stands bound to eternal death, if the debt be not forgiven.

2. *In what sense sin is the worse debt?*

Ans. 1. Because we have nothing to pay; if we could pay the debt, what need we pray, *forgive us*? We can't say, as he in the gospel, *have patience with me, and I will pay thee all*; we can pay neither *principal* nor *interest*. Adam made us all bankrupts; in innocency, Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with, he could give God personal and perfect obedience; but, by his sin, he is quite broken, and hath beggared all his posterity. We have nothing to pay, all our duties are mixed with sin, and so we cannot pay God in current coin.



2. Sin is the worst debt, because it is against an *infinite majesty*. An offence against the person of a king, is *crimen laesae majestatis*, it doth enhance and aggravate the crime. Sin wrongs God, and so it is an infinite offence. The schoolmen say, *omne peccatum contra conscientiam est quasi deicidium, i. e.* Every known sin strikes at the God-head. The sinner would not only unthrone God, but ungod him, this makes the debt infinite.

3. Sin is the worst debt, because it is not a single, but a multiplied debt: forgive us *our debts*; we have debt upon debt, *Pf. xl. 12. Innumerable evils have compassed me about.* We may as well reckon all the drops in the sea, as reckon all our spiritual debts; we cannot tell how much we owe. A man may know his other debts, but we cannot number our spiritual debts. Every vain thought is a sin, *Prov. xiv. 9. The thought of foolishness is sin.* And what swarms of vain thoughts have we? The first rising of corruption, though it never blossom into outward act, is a sin; then, *who can understand his errors?* We do not know how much we owe to God.

4. Sin is the worst debt; because it is an *inexcusable* debt in two respects; 1. There is no denying the debt. 2. There is no shifting it off.

(1.) There is no denying the debt; other debts men may deny. If money be not paid before witnesses, or if the creditor lose the bond, the debtor may say he owes him nothing; but there's no denying this debt of sin. If we say we *have no sin*, God can prove the debt, *Pf. 1. 21. I will set thy sins in order before thee.* God writes down our debts in his book of remembrance, and God's book, and the book of conscience do exactly agree, so that this debt cannot be denied.

(2.) There is no *shifting off the debt*; other debts may be shifted off.

1. We may get *friends* to pay them, but neither man nor angel can pay this debt for us: if all the angels in heaven should go to make a purse, they cannot pay one of our debts.

2. In other debts men may get a *protection*, so that none can touch their persons, or sue them for the debt; but who shall give us a protection from God's justice? *Job x. 7. There is none that can deliver out of thine hand.* Indeed the Pope pretends that his pardon shall be mens protection, and now God's justice shall not sue

them; but that is only a forgery, and cannot be pleaded at God's tribunal.

3. Other debts, if the debtor dies in prison, cannot be recovered, death frees them from debt; but if we die in the debt to God, he knows how to recover it; as long as we have souls to strain on, God will not lose his debt. Not the death of the debtor, but the death of the surety, pays a sinner's debt.

4. In other debts men may flee from their creditor, leave their country, and go into foreign parts, and the creditor cannot find them; but we cannot flee from God. God knows where to find all his debtors, *Pf. cxxxix. 7. Where shall I flee from thy presence? if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea, there shall thy right-hand hold me.*

5. Sin is the worst debt, because it carries men, in case of non-payment, to a worse prison than any upon earth, to a fiery prison; and the sinner is laid in worse chains, chains of darkness, where the sinner is bound under wrath for ever.

Qu. 3. *Wherein have we the properties of bad debtors?*

Ans. 1. A bad debtor doth not love to be called to an account. There's a day coming when God will call his debtors to account, *Rom. xiv. 12. So then, every man shall give an account for himself to God.* But we play away the time, and do not love to hear of the day of judgment; we love not that ministers should put us in mind of our debts, or speak of the day of reckoning. What a confounding word will that be to a secure sinner, *redde rationem*, give an account of your stewardship?

2. A bad debtor is unwilling to confess his debt, he will put it off, or make less of it; so we are more willing to excuse sin, than confess it. How hardly was *Saul* brought to confession? *1 Sam. xv. 20. I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, but the people took of the spoil.* He rather excuseth his sin than confesseth it.

3. A bad debtor is apt to hate his creditor. Debtors with their creditors dead; so wicked men naturally hate God, because they think he is a just judge, and will call them to account; Gr. God-haters. The debtor doth not love to see his creditor.

Use 1. It reproves them who are loth to be in debt, but make no reckoning of sin, which is the greatest debt; they use no means to get out

out of it, but run still further in debt to God. We would think it strange, if writs or warrants were against a man, or a judgment granted to seize his body and estate, yet he is secure and regardless, as if he were unconcerned. God hath a writ out against a sinner, nay, many writs, for swearing, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, yet the sinner eats and drinks, and is quiet, as if he were not in debt; what opium hath Satan given men?

*Use 2. Exhortation.* If sin be a debt, 1. Let us be humbled. The name of debt (saith St. Ambrose) is *grave vocabulum*, grievous.

Men in debt are full of shame, they ly hid, and do not care to be seen. A debtor is ever in fear of arrest. *Canis latrat & cor palpitat.* O let us blush and tremble, who are so deeply indebted to God. A Roman dying in debt, *Augustus* the emperor sent to buy his pillow, because (saith he) I hope it has some virtue in it to make me sleep, on which a man so much in debt could take his ease. We that have so many spiritual debts lying upon us, how can we be at rest till we have some hope that they

are discharged.

2. Let us confess our debt. Let us acknowledge that we are run in arrears with God, and deserve that he should follow the law upon us, and throw us into hell-prison. By confession we give glory to God, *Jesh. vii. 19 My son, give glory to the God of Israel, and make confession to him.* Say that God were righteous if he should strain upon all we have: if we confess the debt, God will forgive it, *1 John ii. 9. If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive.* Do but confess the debt, and God will cross the book, *Pf. xxxii. 5. I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and thou forgavest me.*

3. Labour to get our spiritual debts paid, that is, by our surety Christ. Say, *Lord, have patience with me, and Christ shall pay thee all. He hath laid down an infinite price.* The covenant of works would not admit of a surety, it demanded personal obedience: but this privilege we have by the gospel, which is a court of chancery to relieve us, that if we have nothing to pay, God will accept of a surety. Believe in Christ's blood, and the debt is paid.

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LUKE xi. 4. *And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

**I**N the words are two parts; 1. A petition, *forgive us our sins.* 2. A condition, *For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.* Our forgiving others is not a cause of God's forgiving us, but it is a condition, without which God will not forgive us.

*First,* I begin with the first, the petition, *Forgive us our sins*; a blessed petition! the ignorant world say, *Who will shew us any good?* *Pf. iv. 6.* meaning a good lease, a good purchase; but our Saviour teacheth us to pray for that which is more noble, and will stand us in more stead, the pardon of sin, *Forgive us our sins.* Forgiveness of sin is a primary blessing, it is one of the first mercies God bestows, *Ezek. I will sprinkle clean water upon you*; that is, forgiveness. When God pardons, there is nothing he will stick at to do for the soul; he will adopt, sanctify, crown.

*Qu. 1. What forgiveness of sin is?*

*Ans.* It is God's passing by sin, *Mic. vii. 18.* his wiping off the score, and giving us a discharge.

The nature of forgiveness will more clearly

appear, 1. By opening some scripture-phrases. 2. By laying down some divine aphorisms and positions.

(1.) By opening some scripture-phrases. 1. To forgive sin, is to take away iniquity, *Job vii. 21. Why dost thou not take away mine iniquity? Heb. lift off.* It is a metaphor taken from a man that carries an heavy burden ready to sink him, and another comes, and lifts off this burden; so, when the heavy burden of sin is on us, God in pardoning, lifts off this burden from the conscience, and lays it upon Christ, *Isa. liii. 6. He hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.*

2. To forgive sin, is to cover sin, *Pf. lxxxv. 2. Thou hast covered all their sin.* This was typified by the mercy-seat covering the ark; to shew God's covering of sin through Christ. God doth not cover sin in the *Antinomian* sense, so as he sees it not, but he doth so cover it, as he will not impute it.

3. To forgive sin, is to blot it out, *Isa. xlii. 25. I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.* The Hebrew word, to blot out, alludes to a creditor, who, when his debtor hath paid him, blots



blots out the debt, and gives him an acquittance; so God, when he forgives sin, blots out the debt, he draws the red lines of Christ's blood over our sins, and so crosseth the debt-book.

4. To forgive sin, is for God to scatter our sins as a cloud, *Isa. xlv. 22. I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions.* Sin is the cloud interposeth. God dispels the cloud, and breaks forth with the light of his countenance.

5. To forgive sin, is for God to cast our sins into the depths of the sea, *Mich. vii. 19. which implies God's burying them out of sight, that they shall not rise up in judgment against us. Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* God will throw them in, not as cork that riseth again, but as lead that sinks to the bottom.

(2.) The nature of forgiveness will appear, by laying down some divine aphorisms or positions.

*Aphorism 1.* Every sin is mortal, and needs forgiveness; I say, mortal, that is, deserves death. God may relax the rigour of the law, but every sin merits damnation. The *Papists* distinguish of mortal sins, and venial: some sins are *ex surreptione*, they creep unawares into the mind (as vain thoughts, sudden motions of anger and revenge) these, saith *Bellarmino*, are in their own nature venial. It is true, the greatest sins are in one sense venial, that is, God is able to forgive them; but the least sin is not in its own nature venial, but deserves damnation. We read of the lusts of the flesh, *Rom. xiii. 14. And the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 19.* The lusts of the flesh are sinful, as well as the works of the flesh. That which is a transgression of the law merits damnation; but the first stirrings of corruption are a breach of the royal law, *Rom. vii. 7. Prov. xxiv. 9.* therefore they merit damnation. So that the least sin is mortal, and needs forgiveness.

*Aphorism 2.* It is God only that forgives sin. To pardon sin is one of the *jura regalia*, the flowers of God's crown, *Mark ii. 7. Who can forgive sins but only God?* It is most proper for God to pardon sin, only the creditor can remit the debt. Sin is an infinite offence, and no finite power can discharge an infinite offence. That God only can forgive sin, I prove thus.

No man can take away sin, unless he is able to infuse grace: for (as *Aquinas* saith) with forgiveness is always infusion of grace; but no man can infuse grace, therefore no man can forgive sin. He only can forgive sin, who

can remit the penalty, but it is only God's prerogative royal to forgive sin.

*Obj. 1.* But a christian is charged to forgive his brother, *Col. iii. 13. Forgive one another.*

*Ans.* In all second-table sins, there are two distinct things, 1. *Disobedience against God. 2. Injury to man.* That which man is required to forgive, is the wrong done to himself: but the wrong done to God, he cannot forgive. Man may remit the trespass against himself, but not a transgression against God.

*Object. 2.* But the scripture speaks of the power committed to ministers to forgive sin, *John xx. 23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.*

*Ans.* Ministers cannot remit sin authoritatively and effectually, but only declaratively. They have a special office and authority to apply the promises of pardon to broken hearts. When a minister sees one humbled for sin, yet is afraid God hath not pardoned him, and is ready to be swallowed up of sorrow; in this case, a minister, for the easing of this man's conscience, may, in the name of Christ, declare to him, that he is pardoned; the minister doth not forgive sin by his own authority, but as an herald, in Christ's name, pronounceth a man's pardon. As it was with the priest in the law, God did cleanse the leper, the priest only did pronounce him clean, so it is God, who, by his prerogative doth forgive sin, the minister only pronounceth forgiveness to the sinner, being penitent.

Power to forgive sin authoritatively in one's own name, was never granted to any mortal man. A king may pardon a man's life, but not pardon his sin: popes pardons are insignificant, like blanks in a lottery, good for nothing but to be torn.

*Aphorism 3.* Forgiveness of sin is purely an act of God's free-grace. There are some acts of God which declare his power, as making and governing the world; other acts that declare his justice, as punishing the guilty; other acts that declare his free-grace, as pardoning of sinners, *Isa. xliii. 25. I am he that blotteth out sin for my own name sake.* As when a creditor freely forgives a debtor, *1 Tim. i. 15. I obtained mercy.* I was all over besprinkled with mercy. When God pardons a sin, he doth not pay a debt, but give a legacy. Forgiveness is spun out of the bowels of God's mercy; there is nothing we can do can deserve it: it is not our prayers, or tears, or good deeds, can purchase pardon

pardon. When *Simon Magus* would have bought the gift of the Holy Ghost with money, *thy money (saith Peter) perish with thee*, Acts viii. 20. So they who think they can buy pardon of sin with their duties and alms, their money perish with them: forgiveness is an act of God's free-grace, here he displays the banner of love. This is that will raise the trophies of God's glory, and will cause the saints triumph in heaven, that when there was no worthiness in them, when they lay in their blood, God took pity on them, and held forth the golden sceptre of love in forgiving: Forgiveness is a golden thread spun out of the bowels of free-grace.

*Aphorism or position 4.* Forgiveness is thro' the blood of Christ. Free-grace is the inward cause moving, Christ's blood is the outward cause meriting pardon, Eph. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood.* All pardons are sealed in Christ's blood; the guilt of sin was infinite, and nothing but that blood which was of infinite value could procure forgiveness.

Object. *But if Christ laid down his blood as the price of our pardon, then how can we say, God freely forgives sin? If this be by purchase, how is it by grace?*

*Ans.* 1. It was God's free-grace that found out a way of redemption through a mediator. Nay, God's love appeared more in letting Christ die for us, than if he had forgiven us without exacting any satisfaction.

2. It was free grace moved God to accept of the price paid for our sins: that God should accept a surety; that one should sin, and another suffer, this was free-grace. So that forgiveness of sin, tho' it be purchased by Christ's blood, yet it is by free-grace.

*Aphorism 5.* In forgiveness of sin, God remits the guilt and penalty. *Remissa culpa, remittitur poena.* Guilt is an obligation to punishment, guilt cries for justice: now God in forgiving doth indulge the sinner as to the penalty; God seems to say to the sinner thus, *though thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deserveest to die, yet I will take off the penalty: whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged.* When God pardons a soul, he will not reckon with him in a purely vindictive way, he stops the execution of justice.

*Aphorism 6.* By virtue of this pardon God will no more call sin into remembrance, Heb. viii. 12. *Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* God will pass an act of oblivion, he will not upbraid us with former unkind-

nesses: when we fear God will call over our sins again after pardon, look into this act of indemnity, *their iniquities will I remember no more.* God is said therefore to blot out our sin. A man doth not call for a debt when he hath crossed the book; when God pardons a man, his former displeasure ceaseth, *Hos. xiv. 4. Mine anger is turned away.*

*Qu.* But is God angry with his pardoned ones?

*Ans.* Though a child of God, after pardon, may incur God's fatherly displeasure, yet God's judicial wrath is removed; though God may lay on the rod, yet he hath taken away the curse: correction may befall the saints, but not destruction, *Pf. lxxxix. 31. My loving-kindness I will not take away.*

*Aphorism or position 7.* That sin is not forgiven till it be repented of; therefore they are put together, *Luke xxiv. 47. Repentance and remission.* *Domine, da poenitentiam, & postea indulgentiam*, Fulgentius. 9. Now in repentance there are three main ingredients, and all these must be before forgiveness. 1. Contrition, 2. Confession, 3. Conversion, (1.) Contrition, or brokenness of heart, *Ezek. vii. 16. They shall be like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his own iniquity.* This contrition or rending of the heart, is expressed sometimes by smiting on the breast, *Luke xviii. 13.* sometimes by plucking off the hair, *Ezra ix. 3.* sometimes by watering the couch, *Pf. vi. 6.* But all humiliation is not contrition: some have only pretended sorrow for sin, and so have missed of forgiveness; *Ahab* humbled himself, his garments were rent, not his heart.

*Qu.* What is that remorse and sorrow which goes before forgiveness of sin?

*Ans.* It is an holy sorrow, it is a grieving for sin, *quatenus* sin, as it is sin, and as it is a dishonouring of God, and a defiling of the soul. Though there was no sufferings to follow, yet the true penitent would grieve for sin, *Pf. li. 3. My sin is ever before me.* This contrition goes before remission, *Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. I repented, I smote upon my thigh, is Ephraim my dear son? my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him.* Ephraim is troubled for sinning, and God's bowels were troubled for Ephraim; the woman in the gospel stood at Jesus's feet weeping, and a pardon followed, *Luke vii. 47. Wherefore I say, Her sins which are many, are forgiven her.* The seal is set upon the wax when it melts, God seals his pardon upon melting hearts.



(2.) The second ingredient into repentance is *confession*, Ps. li. 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*. This is not *Auricular* confession, this the papists make a sacrament, and affirm, that without confession of all one's sins in the ears of the priest, no man can receive forgiveness of sin; the scripture is ignorant of it, nor do we read of any general council, till the *Lateran* council, which was about twelve hundred years after Christ, did ever decree auricular confession.

Obj. *But doth not the scripture say, James v. 15. Confess your sins one to another?*

Ans. This is absurdly brought for auricular confession; for, by this, the priest must as well confess to the people, as the people to the priest. The sense of that place is, in case of public scandals, or private wrongs, here confession is to be made to others; but chiefly, confession is to be made to God, who is the party offended; *against thee, thee only have I sinned*. Confession gives vent to sorrow: confession must be free without compulsion, ingenuous without reserve, cordial without hypocrisy; the heart must go along with the confession. This confession makes way for forgiveness, Ps. xxxii. 5. *I said, I would confess my sins, and thou forgavest me*. When the publican and thief on the cross confessed, they had that pardon: the publican smote upon his breast, there was contrition; and said, *God be merciful to me a sinner*; there was confession; he went away justified, there was forgiveness: and the thief on the cross, *We indeed suffer justly*, there was confession; and Christ absolved him before he died, Luke xxiii. 41. *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*. Which words of Christ might occasion that saying of St. Austin, confession shuts the mouth of hell, and opens the gate of paradise.

3. The third ingredient in repentance is, conversion, or turning from sin, Judges x. 15. *We have sinned*, there was confession; v. 16. *They put away their strange gods*, there was conversion. And it must be an universal turning from sin, Ezek. xviii. 31. *Cast away from you all your transgressions*. You would be loth God should forgive only some of your sins: would you have God forgive all, and will not you forsake all? He that hides one rebel, is a traitor to the crown; he that lives in one known sin, is a traitorous hypocrite. And it must not only be a turning from sin, but a turning unto God: therefore it is called *repentance*, (Acts xx. 20.) *Towards God*. The

heart points towards God, as the needle to the north-pole. The prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father, Luke xv. 17. This repentance is the ready way to pardon, Isa. lv. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and turn to the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon*. A king will not pardon a rebel whilst he continues in open hostility. Thus you see repentance goes before remission: they who never repented, can have no ground to hope that their sins are pardoned.

7. *Aphorism* or *position* is, that sin is not forgiven till it be repented of.

*Caution*. Not that repentance doth merit the forgiveness of sin, to make repentance satisfactory is *Papish*; by repentance we *please* God, but we do not *satisfy* him: alas! *Christ's blood must wash our tears*. Repentance is a *condition*, not a *cause*; God will not pardon for repentance, nor yet without it: God seals his pardons on melting hearts; repentance makes us prize pardon the more. He who cries out of his broken bones, will the more prize the mercy of having them set again; when there is nothing in the soul but clouds of sorrow, and now God brings a pardon (which is a setting up of a rainbow in the cloud, to tell the soul the flood of God's wrath shall not overflow.) O what joy at the sight of this rain-bow! the soul now burns in love to God.

8. *Aphorism* or *position*. The greatest sins come within the compass of forgiveness. Incest, sodomy, adultery, theft, murder, which are sins of the first magnitude, yet these are pardonable. Paul was a blasphemer, and so sinned against the first table; a persecuter, and so he sinned against the second table; yet he obtained mercy, 1 Tim. i. 13. *I was all besprinkled with mercy*. Zaccheus, an extortioner, Mary Magdalene an unchaste woman, out of whom seven devils were cast, Manasseh who made the streets run with blood, yet had their pardon. Some of the Jews, who had a hand in crucifying of Christ, were forgiven. God blots out not only the cloud, but the thick cloud, Isa. xlv. 22. *Enormities* as well as *Infirmities*. The king in the parable, forgave his debtor that owed him 10000 talents, Mat. xviii. 27. a talent weighed 3000 shekels, 10000 talents contained almost 12 tun of gold. This was an emblem of God's forgiving great sins, Isa. i. 18. *Though your sins were as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow*. Scarlet, in the Greek is called, *twice dipped*, and the art of man

cannot wash out the dye again. But though our sins are of a scarlet dye, God's mercy can wash them away: the sea can as well cover great rocks as little sands. This I mention, that sinners may *not despair*. God counts it a *glory* to him to forgive great sins; now mercy and love ride in triumph, 1 *Tim.* i. 14. *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, it was exuberant, it did overflow as *Nilus*. We must not measure God by ourselves: God's mercy excels our sins, as much as heaven doth earth, *Isa.* lv. 9. If great sinners could not be forgiven, then great sinners should not be preached to; but the gospel is to be preached to all. If they could not be forgiven, it were a dishonour to Christ's blood; as if the wound were broader than the plaister. God hath first made great sinners *broken vessels*, he hath broken their hearts for sin, and then he hath made them *golden vessels*, he hath filled them with the golden oil of pardoning mercy; this may encourage great sinners to come in and repent. Indeed the sin against the *Holy Ghost* is unpardonable, not but that there is mercy enough in God to forgive it, but because he who hath committed this sin will have no pardon; he despights God, scorns his mercy, spills the cordial of Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot, he puts away salvation from him; but else the greatest sins are pardonable. When a poor sinner looks upon himself, and sees his guilt, and when he looks on God's justice and holiness, he falls down confounded, but here is that may be as a cork to the net, to keep him from despair, if thou wilt leave thy sins and come to Christ, mercy can seal thy pardon.

*Aphorism 9.* When God pardons a sinner, he forgives all sins, *Jer.* xxxiii. 8. *I will pardon all their iniquities.* Col. ii. 13. *Having forgiven you all trespasses.* The mercy-seat covered the whole ark; the mercy-seat was a type of forgiveness, to shew that God covers all our transgressions. He doth not leave one sin upon the score: he doth not take his pen, and for fourscore sins write down fifty, but blots out all sin, *Psa.* ciii. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.* When I say, God forgives all sins, I understand it of sins past, but sins to come are not forgiven till they are repented of. Indeed God hath decreed to pardon them; and when God forgives one sin, he will in time forgive all: but sins future are not actually pardoned, till they are repented of; it is absurd

to think sin should be forgiven, before it is committed.

1. If all sins past and to come are at once forgiven, then, what need a man pray for the pardon of sin? It is a vain thing to pray for the pardon of that which is already forgiven.

2. This opinion, that sins to come (as well as past) are forgiven, doth take away and make void Christ's intercession: Christ is an *advocate* to intercede for *daily sins*. 1 *John* ii. 1. But if sin be forgiven before it be committed, what need is there of Christ's daily intercession? So that God, though he forgives all sins past to a believer, yet sins to come are not forgiven, till repentance be renewed.

*Aphorism 10.* Faith doth necessarily antecede forgiveness, there must be believing on our part, before there is forgiving on God's part, *Acts* x. 43. *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.* So that faith is a necessary antecedent to forgiveness. There are two acts of faith, to accept Christ, and to trust in Christ, to accept of his terms, to trust in his merits; and he who doth neither of these, can have no forgiveness; he who doth not accept Christ, cannot have his person; he that doth not trust in him, cannot have benefit by his blood. So that, without faith, no remission.

*Aphorism 11.* Though justification and sanctification are not the same, yet God never pardons a sinner, but he doth sanctify him. Justification and sanctification are not the same.

1. Justification is without us, sanctification is within us. The one is by righteousness imparted, the other is by righteousness imparted.

2. Justification is equal, sanctification is gradual. Sanctification doth *recipere majus & minus*: one is sanctified more than another, but one is not justified more than another; one hath more grace than another, but he is not more a believer than another.

3. The matter of our justification is perfect viz. Christ's righteousness; but our sanctification is imperfect, there are the *spots of God's children*, *Deut.* xxxii. 5. Our graces are mixed, our duties are defiled. Thus justification and sanctification are not the same: yet, for all that, they are not separated: God never pardons and justifies a sinner, but he doth sanctify him, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. *But ye are justified, but ye are sanctified.* 1 *John* v. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus*



*Christ.* Christ comes to the soul by blood, that denotes remission; and by water, that denotes sanctification. Let no man say he is pardoned, that is not made holy. And this, I the rather urge against the *Antinomians*, who talk of being forgiven their sin, and having a part in Christ, and yet remain unconverted, and live in the grossest sins. Pardon and healing go together, *Isa. lvii. 19. I create the fruit of the lips, peace. And I will heal him.* Peace is the fruit of pardon, and then it follows, *I will heal him.* Where God pardons, he purifies: as in the inauguration of kings, with the crown there is the oil to anoint: so when God crowns a man with forgiveness, there he gives the anointing oil of grace to sanctify, *Rev. ii. 17. I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name.* A white stone, that is absolution; and a new name in the stone, that is sanctification.

1. If God should pardon a man, and not sanctify him, this would be a reproach to him; then he should love, and be well-pleased with men in their sins, which is diametrically contrary to his holy nature.

2. If God should pardon, and not sanctify, then he could have no glory from us. God's people are formed to shew forth his praise, *Isa. xliii. 21.* but if he should pardon and not sanctify us, how could we shew forth his praise? How could we glorify him? What glory can God have by a proud, ignorant, profane heart?

3. If God should pardon, and not sanctify, then that should enter into heaven which defileth; but, *Rev. xxii. 27. Nothing shall enter that defileth.* Then God should settle the inheritance upon men before they are fit for it, contrary to that, *Col. i. 12. He hath made us meet for the inheritance:* how is that but by the divine unction? So that, whoever God forgives, he transforms. Let no man say his sins are forgiven, who doth not find an inherent work of holiness in his heart.

*Aphorism 12.* Where God remits sin, he imputes righteousness. This righteousness of Christ imputed, is a *salvo* to God's law, and makes full satisfaction for the breaches of it. This righteousness procures God's favour; God cannot but love us, when he sees us in his son's robe, which both covers and adorns us. In this spotless robe of Christ we outshine the angels: theirs is but the righteousness of creatures, this is the righteousness of God him-

self, *2 Cor. v. 21. That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* How great a blessing then is forgiveness? With remission of sin is joined imputation of righteousness.

*Aphorism 13.* They whose sins are forgiven, must not omit praying for forgiveness, *Forgive us our trespasses.* Believers who are pardoned, must be continual suiters for pardon. When *Nathan* told *David*, *The Lord hath put away thy sin*, *2 Sam. xii. 13.* yet *David* after that, composed a penitential psalm for the pardon of his sin. Sin, like *Samson's* hair, though it be cut, will grow again. We sin daily, and must as well ask for daily pardon, as for daily bread. Besides, a christian's pardon is not so sure, but he may desire to have a clearer evidence of it.

*Aphorism 14.* A full absolution from all sin is not pronounced till the day of judgment. The day of judgment is called a *time of refreshing*, when sin shall be compleatly blotted out, *Acts iii. 19.* Now God blots out sin truly, but then it shall be done in a more public way; God will openly pronounce the saints absolution before men and angels: their happiness is not compleated till the day of judgment, because then their pardon shall be solemnly pronounced, and there shall be the triumphs of the heavenly host. At that day it will be true indeed, that God sees no sin in his children: they shall be as pure as the angels; then the church shall be presented without wrinkle, *Eph. v. 27.* She shall be as free from stain as guilt; then Satan shall no more accuse, Christ will shew the debt-book crossed in his blood: therefore the church doth so pray for Christ's coming to judgment, *Rev. xxii. 17. The bride saith, come Lord Jesus; light the lamps, then burn the incense.*

*Use 1. Of information.* From this word, *Forgive*, we learn that if the debt of sin be no other way discharged but by being forgiven, then we cannot satisfy for it. Among other damnable opinions of the church of *Rome*, this is one, man's power to satisfy for sin. The council of *Trent* holds, that God is satisfied by our undergoing the penalty imposed by the censure of priests: and again, we have works of our own, by which we may satisfy for our wrongs done to God: by these opinions, let any judge what the popish religion is. They intend to pay the debt they owe God themselves, to pay it in part, and do not look to have it all forgiven: but why did Christ teach us to pray,  
*Forgive*

*Forgive us our sins*, if we can of ourselves satisfy God for the wrong we have done him? This doctrine robs God of his glory, Christ of his merit, and the soul of salvation. Alas! is not the lock cut where our strength lay? Are not all our works fly-blown with sin, and can sin satisfy for sin? This doctrine makes men their own favourites: it is most absurd to hold; for, can the obedience of a finite creature satisfy for an infinite offence? Sin being forgiven, clearly implies we cannot satisfy for it.

2. From this word *us*, forgive *us*, we learn that pardon is chiefly to be sought for ourselves: for though we are to pray for the pardon of others, *James vi. 16. Pray one for another*, yet in the first place, we are to beg pardon for ourselves. What, will another's pardon do us good? Every one is to endeavour to have his own name in the pardon. A son may be made free by his father's copy, but he cannot be pardoned by his father's pardon, he must have a pardon for himself. In this sense, selfishness is lawful, every one must be for himself, and get a pardon for his own sins. *Forgive us*.

3. From this word *OUR*, *Our sins*, we learn how just God is in punishing us. The text says, *our sins*; we are not punished for other mens sins, but *our own*. *Non habet de proprio, nisi peccatum*---*Augustine*. There's nothing we can call so properly ours, as sin. *Our daily bread* we have from God, *our daily sins* we have from ourselves. Sin is our own act, a web of our own spinning; how righteous therefore is God in punishing of us? we sow the seed, and God only makes us reap what we sow, *Jer. xvii. 10. I give every man the fruit of his own doings*. When we are punished, we but taste the fruit of our own grafting.

4. From this word *sins*, see from hence the multitude of sins we stand guilty of. We pray not, forgive us our sin, (as if it were only a single debt) but *sins*, in the plural: so vast is the catalogue of our sins, that *David* cries out, *Who can understand his errors?* *Pf. xix. 12.* Our sins are like the drops in the sea, like the atoms in the sun, they exceed all arithmetic. Our debts we owe to God, we can no more number, than we can satisfy; which, as it should humble us, to consider how full of black spots our souls are, so it should put us upon seeking after the pardon of our sins. And this brings to the second use,

*Exhortation.* To labour to have the forgiveness of sin sealed up to us. How can we eat,

or drink, or sleep without it? 'Tis sad dying without a pardon; this is to fall into the labyrinth of despair; of this the next time.

*Use 2.* Let us labour for the forgiveness of sin. If ever this was needful, then now, when the times ring changes, and danger seems to be marching towards us. Labour, I say, for the forgiveness of sin: this is a main branch of the charter or covenant of grace, *Heb. x. 12. I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities I will remember no more*. It is mercy to feed us, but it is rich mercy to pardon us; this is spun and woven out of the bowels of free-grace. Earthly things are no signs of God's love; he may give the *venison*, but not the *bleeding*: but when God seals up forgiveness, he gives his love and heaven with it, *1st. xxi. 3. Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head*. A crown of gold was a mercy, but if you look into *psalm ciii.* you shall find a greater mercy, *v. 3, 4. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness*. To be crowned with forgiveness and loving-kindness, is a far greater mercy, than to have a crown of pure gold set upon the head. It was a mercy when Christ cured the palsy man; but when Christ said to him, *thy sins are forgiven*, *Mark ii. 5.* this was more than to have his palsy healed: forgiveness of sin is the chief thing to be sought after; and sure, if conscience be once touched with a sense of sin, there is nothing a man will thirst after more than forgiveness, *Pf. li. 3. My sin is ever before me*. This made *David* so earnest for pardon, *Pf. li. 1. Have mercy upon me, O God; blot out my transgressions*: If one should have come to *David*, and asked him, *David*, where is thy pain? what is it troubles thee? is it the fear of shame which shall come upon thee and thy wives? is it the fear of a sword which God hath threatned shall not depart from thy house? He would have said, *No*, it is only my sin pains me; *my sin is ever before me*. Were but this removed by forgiveness, tho' the sword did ride in circuit in my family, I should be well enough content. When the arrow of guilt sticks in the conscience, nothing is so desirable as to have this arrow plucked out by forgiveness. Oh therefore seek after forgiveness of sin. Can you make a shift to live without it? but how will you do to die without it? will not death have a sting to an unpardoned sinner? how do you think to get to heaven without forgiveness? As at some solemn festivals, there is no being admitted unless



unless you bring a ticket: so, unless you have this *ticket* to show, *forgiveness of sin*, there is no being admitted into the holy place of heaven. Will God ever crown those that he will not forgive? *O be ambitious of pardoning grace.* When God had made *Abraham* great and large promises, *Abraham* replies, *Lord, what is all, seeing I go childless?* Gen. xv. 2. So, when God hath given the riches, and all thy heart can wish, say to him, Lord, what is all this, seeing I want forgiveness? Let my pardon be sealed in Christ's blood. A prisoner in the *Tower* is in an ill case, notwithstanding his brave diet, great attendance, soft bed to ly on, because, being impeached, he looks every day for his arraignment, and is afraid of the sentence of death; in such a case, and worse, is he, that swims in the pleasures of the world, but his sins are not forgiven: a guilty conscience doth impeach him, and he is in fear of being arraigned and condemned at God's judgment-seat. Give not then sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eye-lids, till you have gotten some well-grounded hope that your sins are blotted out. Before I come to press the exhortation to seek after forgiveness of sin, I shall propound one question.

*Qu. If pardon of sin be so absolutely necessary, without it no salvation, what is the reason that so few in the world seek after it? If they want health, they repair to the physician; if they want riches, they take a voyage to the Indies; but if they want forgiveness of sin, they seem to be unconcerned, and do not seek after it: whence is this?*

*Ans.* 1. *Inadvertency*, or want of consideration: they do not look into their spiritual estate, or cast up their accounts to see how matters stand between God and their souls, *Isa. i. 3. My people do not consider:* they do not consider they are indebted to God in a debt of ten thousand talents, and that God will, ere long, call them to account, *Rom. xiv. 12. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.* But people shun serious thoughts; *my people do not consider.* Hence it is they do not look after pardon.

2. Men do not seek after forgiveness of sin, for want of *conviction*. Few are convinced what a deadly evil sin is, it is the spirits of mischief distilled, it turns a man's glory into shame, it brings all plagues on the body, and curses on the soul. Unless a man's sin be forgiven, there is not the vilest creature alive, the dog, serpent, road, but is in a better condition than the sin-

ner; for when they die, they go but to the earth; but he dying without pardon, goes into hell-torments for ever. Men are not convinced of this, but play with the viper of sin.

3. Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness, because they are *seeking other things*: they seek the world immoderately. When *Saul* was seeking after the asses, he did not think of a kingdom. The world is a golden snare. *Divitiae sæculi sunt laquei diaboli*, Bern. The wedge of gold hinders many from seeking after a pardon. Ministers cry to the people, get your pardon sealed: but if you call to a man that is in a mill, the noise of the mill drowns the voice, that he cannot hear: so, when the mill of a trade is going, it makes such a noise, that the people cannot hear the minister when he lifts up his voice, like a trumpet, and cries to them to look after the sealing of their pardon. He who spends all his time about the world, and doth not mind forgiveness, will accuse himself of folly at last. You would judge that prisoner very unwise, that should spend all his time with the cook to get his dinner ready, and should never mind getting a pardon.

4. Men seek not after the forgiveness of sin, through a bold presumption of mercy; they conceit God to be made up all of mercy, and that he will indulge them, tho' they take little or no pains to sue out their pardon. 'Tis true, God is merciful, but withal he is just, he will not wrong his justice by shewing mercy. Read the proclamation, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord God merciful;* ver. 7. *and that will by no means clear the guilty.* Such as go on in sin, and are so slothful or wilful, that they will not seek after forgiveness, tho' there be a whole ocean of mercy in the Lord, not one drop shall fall to their share, *he will by no means clear the guilty.*

5. Men seek not earnestly after forgiveness, out of hope of *impunity*. They flatter themselves in sin, and because they have been spared so long, therefore sure, God never intends to reckon with them, *Pf. x. 11. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hides his face, he will never see it.* Atheists think, either the judge is blind, or forgetful; but let sinners know, that long forbearance is no forgiveness. God did bear with *Sodom* a long time, but at last rained down fire and brimstone upon them: the adjourning the assizes doth not acquit the prisoner: the longer God is taking the blow, the heavier it will be at last, if sinners repent not.

6. Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness through

through a mistake; they think getting a pardon is easy, it is but repenting at the last hour, a sigh, or a Lord have mercy, and a pardon will drop into their mouths. But, is it so easy to repent, and have a pardon? tell me, O sinner, is regeneration easy? are there no pangs in the new birth? is mortification easy? is it nothing to pluck out the right eye? is it easy to leap out of *Dalilah's* lap into *Abraham's* bosom? This is the draw-net, by which the devil drags millions to hell, the facility of repenting and getting pardon.

7. Men do not look after forgiveness thro' *Despair*. Oh, faith the desponding soul, it is a vain thing for me to expect pardon; my sins are so many and hainous, that sure God will not forgive me. *Jer. xviii. 12. And they said there is no hope.* My sins are huge mountains, and, can they ever be cast into the sea? despair cuts the sinews of endeavour; who will use means that despairs of success? The devil shews some men their sins at the little end of the perspective-glass, and they seem little, or none at all; but he shews others their sins at the great end of the perspective, and they fright them into despair. This is a soul-damning sin, *Judas's* despair was worse than his treason. Despair spills the cordial of Christ's blood: this is the voice of despair, Christ's blood cannot pardon me. Thus you see whence it is that men seek no more earnestly after the forgiveness of sin. Having answered this question, I shall now come to press the exhortation upon every one of us, to seek earnestly after the forgiveness of our sins.

1. Our very life lies upon the getting of a pardon: it is called the *justification of life*, *Rom. v. 18.* Now, if our life lies upon our pardon, and we are dead and damned without it, doth it not concern us above all things to labour after forgiveness of sin? *Deut. xxxii. 47. For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.* If a man be under a sentence of death, he will set his wits a-work, and make use of all his friends to get the king to grant his pardon, because his life lies upon it: so we are, by reason of sin, under a sentence of damnation; now, there is one friend at court we may make use of to procure our pardon, namely, the Lord Jesus: how earnest then should we be with him to be our advocate to the Father for us, and that he would present the merit of his blood to the father, as the price of our pardon?

2. There is that in sin may make us desire forgiveness. Sin is the only thing that disquiets the soul. 1. Sin is a burden, it burdens the creation, *Rom. viii. 22.* it burdens the conscience, *Pf. xxxviii. 4.* A wicked man is not sensible of sin, he is dead in sin; and if you lay a thousand weight upon a dead man, he feels it not. But to an awakened conscience there is no such burden as sin; when a man seriously weighs with himself the glory and purity of that majesty which sin hath offended, the preciousness of that soul which sin hath polluted, the loss of that happiness which sin hath endangered, the greatness of that torment which sin hath deserved, to lay all this together, sure must make sin burdensome: and should not we labour to have this burden removed by pardoning mercy? 2. Sin is a debt, *Mat. vi. 12. Forgive us our debts;* and every debt we owe, God hath written down in his book, *Isa. lxv. 6. Behold it is written before me,* and one day God's debt-book will be opened, *Rev. xx. 12. The books were opened.* And, is not this that which may make us look after forgiveness? Sin being such a debt as we must eternally lie in the prison of hell for, if it be not discharged; shall not we be earnest with God to cross the debt-book with the blood of his son? There is no way to look God in the face with comfort, but by having our debts either paid, or pardoned.

3. There is nothing but forgiveness can give ease to a troubled conscience. There is a great difference between the having the fancy pleased, and having the conscience eased: worldly things may please the fancy, but not ease the conscience: nothing but pardon can relieve a troubled soul. It is strange what shifts men will make for ease when conscience is pained, and how many false medicines they will use, before they will take the right way for a cure. When conscience is troubled, they will try what merriness company can do; they may perhaps drink away trouble of conscience; perhaps they may play it away at cards, perhaps a Lent-whipping will do the deed; perhaps multitude of business will so take up their time, that they shall have no leisure to hear the clamours and accusations of conscience: but how vain are these attempts! still their wound bleeds inwardly, their heart trembles, their conscience roars, and they can have no peace. Whence is it? Here is the reason, they go not to the mercy of God, and the blood of Christ, for the pardon of their sins; and hence it is they can have no ease.

Suppose:



Suppose a man hath a thorn in his foot, which puts him to pain; let him anoint it, or wrap it up, and keep it warm; yet, till the thorn be plucked out, it akes and swells, and he hath no ease: so when the thorn of sin is gotten into a man's conscience, there's no ease till the thorn be pulled out; when God removes iniquity, now the thorn is plucked out. How was *David's* heart finely quieted, when *Nathan* the prophet told him, *the Lord hath put away thy sin*, 2 Sam. xii. 13. How should we therefore labour for forgiveness! till then we can have no ease in our mind: nothing but a pardon, sealed with the blood of the redeemer, can ease a wounded spirit.

4. Forgiveness of sin is feasible; it may be obtained. Impossibility destroys endeavour; but, as *Ezra* x. 2. *There is hope in Israel concerning this*. The devils are past hope; a sentence of death is past upon them, which is irrevocable; but there is hope for us of obtaining a pardon, *Pf. cxxx. 4. There is forgiveness with thee*. If pardon of sin were not possible, then it were not to be prayed for; but it hath been prayed for, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. *I beseech thee, O Lord, take away mine iniquity*; and Christ bids us pray for it, *Forgive us our trespasses*. That is possible which God hath promised, but God hath promised pardon upon repentance, *Isa. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*. Hebrew, *He will multiply to pardon*. That is possible which others have obtained; but others have arrived at forgiveness, therefore it is haveable, *Pf. xxxii. 5. Isaiah xxxviii. 16. Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back*. This may make us endeavour after pardon, because it is feasible, it may be had.

5. Consideration, to persuade to it, is, forgiveness of sin is a choice eminent blessing: to have the book cancelled, and God appeased, is worth obtaining; which may whet our endeavour after it. That is a rare transcendent blessing, appears by three demonstrations.

1st, If we consider how this blessing is purchased, namely; by the Lord Jesus. There are three things in reference to Christ, which set forth the choiceness and preciousness of forgiveness,

1. No mere created power in heaven or earth could expiate one sin, or procure a pardon; only Jesus Christ, 1 John ii. 2. *He is the propitiation for our sins*. No Merit can buy out

a pardon. *Paul* had as much to boast of as any man, his high birth, his learning, his legal righteousness; but he disclaims all in point of justification, and lays them under Christ's feet to tread upon. No angel could, with all his holiness, lay down a price for the pardon of one sin, 1 Sam. ii. 25. *If a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?* What angel durst be so bold, as to open his mouth to God for a delinquent sinner? Only Jesus Christ, who is God-man, could deal with God's justice, and purchase forgiveness.

2. Christ himself could not procure a pardon, but by dying; every pardon is the price of blood. Christ's life was a rule of holiness, and a pattern of obedience, *Mat. iii. 15. He fulfilled all righteousness*. And certainly, Christ's active obedience was of great value and merit; but here is that which raiseth the worth of forgiveness, Christ's active obedience had not fully procured a pardon for us, without the shedding of his blood: therefore our justification is ascribed to his blood, *Rom. v. 9. Being justified by his blood*. Christ did bleed out our pardon. There's much ascribed to Christ's intercession, but his intercession had not prevailed with God for the forgiveness of one sin, had not he shed his blood. It is worth our notice, that when Christ is described to *John* as an intercessor for his church, he is represented to him in the likeness of a lamb slain, *Rev. v. 6*. to shew that Christ must die, and be slain, before he can be an intercessor.

3. Christ, by dying, had not purchased forgiveness for us, if he had not died an execrable death; he endured the curse, *Gal. iii. 13*. All the agonies Christ endured in his soul, all the torments in his body, could not purchase a pardon, except he had been made a curse for us, Christ must be cursed, before we could be blessed with a pardon.

2dly, Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, if we consider what glorious attributes God puts forth in the pardoning of sin. (1.) God puts forth infinite power: when *Moses* was pleading with God for the pardon of *Israel's* sin, he speaks thus, *Let the power of my Lord be great*, *Numb. xiv. 17*. God's forgiving of sin is a work of as great power as to make heaven and earth, nay, a greater: For, when God made the world, he met with no opposition; but, when he comes to pardon, Satan opposeth, and the heart opposeth. A sinner is desperate, and slights, yea, defies a pardon, till God, by his mighty power, convinceth him of his sin

and danger, and makes him willing to accept of a pardon. (2.) God, in forgiving sins, puts forth *infinite mercy*, Numb. xiv. 19. *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.* It is mercy to have a reprieve; and if there be mercy in sparing a sinner, what mercy then is in pardoning him? This is the *flus lactis*, the cream of mercy. For God to put up so many injuries, to wipe so many debts off the score, this is infinite favour; forgiveness of sin is spun out of the bowels of God's mercy.

3dly, Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, as it lays a foundation for other mercies. It is a leading mercy. 1. It makes way for temporal good things. (1.) It brings health. When Christ said to the palsy man, *Thy sins are forgiven*, this made way for a bodily cure, *Arise, take up thy bed and walk*, Mat. ix. 6. The pardon of his sin made way for the healing of his palsy. 2. It brings prosperity, Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9. 2. It makes way for spiritual good things. Forgiveness of sin never comes alone, but hath other spiritual blessings attending it. Whom God pardons, he sanctifies, adops, crowns. It is a voluminous mercy, it draws the silver link of grace, and the golden link of glory after it. It is an high act of indulgence, God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. And should not we, above all things, seek after so great a blessing as forgiveness?

6. Consideration, that which may make us seek after forgiveness of sin is, *God's inclinableness to pardon*, Neh. ix. 17. *Thou art a God ready to pardon.* In the Hebrew it is, *A God of pardons*. We are apt to entertain wrong conceits of God, that he is inexorable, and will not forgive, Mat. xxv. 24. *I knew thou wert an hard man.* But God is a sin-pardoning God, Exod. xxxiv. 6. *The Lord, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.* Here is my name (saith God) if you would know how I am called, I tell you my name, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, forgiving iniquity.* A pirate or rebel, that knows there is a proclamation out against him, will never come in; but, if he hears that the prince is full of clemency, and there is a proclamation of pardon to him, if he submit, this will be a great incentive to him to lay down his arms, and become loyal to his prince. See God's proclamation to repenting sinners, Jer. iii. 12. *Go and proclaim these words, and say, return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger*

*to fall upon thee, for I am merciful.* God's mercy is a *tender mercy*. The Hebrew word for mercy signifies *bowels*. God's mercy is full of sympathy, he is of a most sweet indulgent nature, Ps. lxxxvi. 5. *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.* The bee doth not more naturally give honey, than God shew mercy.

Obj. 1. *But doth not God seem to delight in punitive acts, or acts of severity?* Prov. i. 26. *I will laugh at your calamity.*

Ans. Who doth God say so to? See verse 25. *Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.* God delights in their destruction who despise his instruction; but an humble penitentiary breaking off sin, and suing out his pardon, the Lord delights in shewing mercy to such an one, Micah vii. 18. *He delighteth in mercy.*

Obj. 4. *But though God be so full of mercy, and ready to forgive, yet his mercy reacheth not to all; he forgives only such as are elected, and I question my election?*

Ans. 1. No man can say he is not elected: God hath not revealed this to any particular man, that he is a reprobate, excepting him only who hath sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; which sin thou art far enough from, who mournest for sin, and seekest after forgiveness.

2. These thoughts of non-election, that we are not elected, and that there is no pardon for us, come from Satan, and are the poisoned arrows he shoots. He is the *accuser*; he accuseth us to God, that we are great sinners; and, he accuseth God to us, as if he were a tyrant, One that did watch to destroy his creature, these are diabolical suggestions; say, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

3. It is sinful for any to hold that he is not elected; it would take him off from the use of means, from praying, and repenting; it would harden him, and make him desperate: therefore pry not into the *Arcana celi*, the secrets of heaven. Remember what befel the men of *Bethshemesh*, for looking into the ark, 1 Sam. vi. 19. Know that we are not to go by God's secret will, but by his revealed will; look into God's revealed will, and there we shall find enough to cherish hope, and encourage us to go to God for the pardon of our sins. God hath revealed in his word, *that he is rich in mercy*, Eph. ii. 4. *That he doth not delight in the destruction of a sinner*, Ezek. xviii. 32. *Jurat per Essentiam*, (Musculus.) He swears by his essence,



essence, *Ezek. xxxiii. 11. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.* Hence it is God waits so long, and puts off the sessions from time to time, to see if sinners will repent, and seek to him for pardon: therefore let God's tender mercies and precious promises encourage us to seek to him for the forgiveness of our sins.

Consideration 7. Not to seek earnestly for pardon, is the unspeakable misery of such as want forgiveness; it must needs be ill with that malefactor that wants his pardon.

1. The unpardoned sinner (that lives and dies so) is under the greatest *loss and privation*. Is there any happiness like to the enjoying of God in glory; this is the joy of angels, the crown of saints glorified; but the unforgiven sinner shall not behold God's smiling face; he shall see God as an enemy, not as a friend; he shall have an affrighting sight of God, not beatifical; he shall see the black rod, not the mercy-seat. Sins unpardoned are like the angels with a flaming sword, who stopped the passage to paradise; sins unpardoned stop the way to the heavenly paradise; and how doleful is the condition of that soul which is banished from the place of bliss, where the King of glory keeps his court?

2. The unpardoned sinner hath nothing to do with any promise; the promises are *mulctralia evangelii*, the breasts that hold the sincere milk of the word, which fills the soul with precious sweetness; they are the royal charter: but what hath a stranger to do to meddle with the charter? It was the dove plucked the olive-branches; it is only the believer plucks the tree of the promise. Till the condition of the promise be performed, no man can have right to the comfort of the promise; and how sad is that, not to have one promise to show for heaven?

3. An unpardoned sinner is continually in danger of the outcry of an accusing conscience. An accusing conscience is a little hell. *Siculi non invenerunt tyranni tormentum majus.* We tremble to hear a lion rore: how terrible are the roarings of conscience: *Judas* hanged himself, to quiet his conscience: a sinner's conscience at present is either asleep, or seared; but when God shall awaken conscience either by affliction, or at death, how will the unpardoned sinner be affrighted? When a man shall have all his sins set before his eyes, and drawn out in their bloody colours, and the worm of con-

science begins to gnaw; sinner, here are thy debts, and the book is not cancelled, thou must to hell; O what a trembling at heart will the sinner have?

4. All the curses of God stand in full force against an unpardoned sinner. His very blessings are cursed, *Mal. ii. 2. I will curse your blessings.* His table is a snare; he eats and drinks a curse. What comfort could *Dionysius* have at his feast, when he imagined he saw a naked sword hanging by a twinethreed over his head? This is enough to spoil a sinner's banquet; a curse like a naked sword hangs over his head? *Cesar* wondered to see one of his soldiers so merry that was in debt. One would wonder that men should be merry, who is heir to all God's curses; he doth not see these curses, but is blinder than *Balaam's* ass, who saw the angel's sword drawn.

5. The unpardoned sinner is in an ill case at death. *Luther* professed, there were three things which he durst not think of without Christ; of his sins, of death, of the day of judgment. Death to a Christless soul is the *king of terrors*. As the prophet *Abijah* said to *Jeroboam's* wife, *1 Kings xiv. 6. I am sent to thee with heavy tidings*; so death is sent to the unpardoned soul with heavy tidings: it is God's jaylor to arrest him. Death is a prologue to damnation: in particular,

(1.) Death is a *voider*, to take away all his earthly comforts, it takes away his sugared morsels; no more drinking wine in bowls, no more mirth or music, *Rev. xviii. 22. The voice of harpers and musicians shall be heard no more at all in thee.* The sinner shall never taste of luscious delights more to all eternity; his honey shall be turned into the *gall of asps*, *Job xx. 14.*

(2.) At death there shall be an end put to all *reprieves*. Now God reprieves a sinner, he spares him such a fit of sickness; he respires him many years; the sinner should have died such a drinking-bout, but God granted him a reprieve; he lengthened out the silver thread of patience to a miracle: but the sinner dying without repentance, unpardoned, now the lease of God's patience is run out, and the sinner must appear in person before the righteous God to receive his sentence; after which there shall be none to bail him; nor shall he hear of a reprieve any more.

6. The unpardoned sinner, dying so, must go into damnation; this is the second death,  
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*mors sine morte.* The unpardoned soul must for ever bear the anger of a sin-revenging God: as long as God is God, so long the vial of his wrath shall be dropping upon the damned soul; this is an helpless condition. There is a time when a sinner will not be helped: Christ and salvation are offered to him, but he slights them, he will not be helped: and there is a time shortly coming, when he cannot be helped; he calls out for mercy, O a pardon, a pardon! but then it is too late, the date of mercy is expired; O how sad then is it to live and die unpardoned? You may lay a grave-stone upon that man, and write this epitaph upon it, *it had been good for that man he had never been born.* Now if the misery of an unpardoned state be so unexpressible, how should we labour for forgiveness, that we may not be ingulphed in so dreadful a labyrinth of fire and brimstone to all eternity?

7. Such as are unpardoned must needs lead uncomfortable lives, *Deut. xxviii. 66. Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt be in continual fears.* Thus the unpardoned sinner must needs have a palpitation and trembling at the heart; he fears every bush he sees, *1 John iv. 18. Fear hath torment in it.* The Greek word for torment, *Kolasis*, is used sometimes for hell: fear hath hell in it. A man in debt fears every step he goes, lest he should be arrested: so the unpardoned sinner fears, what if this night death, which is God's sergeant, should arrest him? *Job vii. 21. Why dost not thou pardon my sin? For now shall I sleep in the dust:* as if *Job* had said, *Lord, I shall shortly die, I shall sleep in the dust;* and what shall I do if my sins be not pardoned? What comfort can an unpardoned soul take in any thing? Sure no more than a prisoner can take in meat or music, that wants his pardon. Therefore, by all these powerful motives, let us labour for the forgiveness of sin.

Obj. 1. *But I am discouraged from going to God for pardon, for I am unworthy of forgiveness; what am I, that God should do such a favour for me?*

*Ans.* God forgives, not because we are worthy, but because he is *gracious*, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious.* God forgives, out of his clemency: acts of pardon, are acts of *grace*. What worthiness was there in *Paul* before conversion? He was a blasphemer, and so he sinned against the first table; he was a persecuter, and so he sinned a-

gainst the second table: but free-grace sealed his pardon, *1 Tim. i. 13. I obtained mercy; I was all bestowed with mercy.* What worthiness was in the woman of *Samaria*? She was ignorant, *John iv. 22.* Was unclean, *v. 18.* She was morose and churlish, she would not give Christ so much as a cup of cold water, *ver. 9. How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?* What worthiness was here? Yet Christ overlooked all, and pardoned her ingratitude; and though she denied him water out of the well, yet he gave her the water of life. *Gratia non invenit dignos, sed facit.* Free-grace doth not find us worthy, but makes us worthy. Therefore, notwithstanding unworthiness, seek to God, and your sins may be pardoned.

Obj. 2. *But I have been a great sinner, and sure God will not pardon me.*

*Ans.* David brings it as an argument for pardon, *Psa. xxv. 11. Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* When God forgives great sins, now he doth a work like himself. The desperateness of the wound doth the more set forth the virtue of Christ's blood in curing it. *Mary Magdalene, a great sinner*, out of whom seven devils were cast, yet she had her pardon. Some of the *Jews*, who had an hand in crucifying of Christ, upon their repentance, the very blood they shed did seal their pardon. Consider sins either for their number, as the sands of the sea; or for their weight as the rocks of the sea; yet there is mercy enough in God to forgive them, *Isa. i. 18. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow.* Scarlet signifies twice dipped, which no art of man can get out; yet God can wash out this scarlet dye. There is no sin excepted from pardon, but that sin which despiseth pardon, *viz.* the sin against the holy Ghost, *Mat. xii. 31.* Therefore, O sinner, do not cast away the anchor of hope, but go to God for forgiveness. The vast ocean hath bounds set to it, but God's pardoning mercy is boundless. God can as well forgive great sins, as less; as the sea can as well cover great rocks, as little sands. Nothing hinders pardon, but the sinner's *not asking it.*

That a great sinner should not despair of forgiveness, consult that scripture, *Isa. xlii. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.* If you look on the foregoing words, you would wonder how this verse comes in, *verse 24. Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities;* and then



then it follows, *I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions*. One would have thought it should have run thus, *Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities; I, even I, am he that will punish thy iniquities*: but God comes in a mild loving strain, *Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities, I am he that blots out thy iniquities*. So that the greatness of our sins should not discourage us from going to God for forgiveness. Though thou hast committed acts of impiety, but God can come with an act of indemnity, and say, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions*. God counts it his glory to display free-grace in its orient colours, *Rom. v. 20. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. When sin becomes exceeding sinful, free-grace becomes exceeding glorious. God's pardoning love can conquer the sinner, and triumph over the sin. Consider, thou almost-despairing soul, there is not so much sin in man as there is mercy in God: man's sin in comparison of God's mercy, is but as a spark to the ocean; and who would doubt whether a spark could be quenched in an ocean?

Obj. 3. *But I have relapsed into the same sins, and how can I have the face to come to God for pardon of those sins which I have more than once fallen into?*

Ans. I know that the Novatians held that after a relapse no forgiveness by the church. But doubtless, that was an error: Abraham did twice equivocate, Lot committed incest twice, Peter sinned thrice by carnal fear; but these repenting, had their absolution.

There is a twofold relapse, 1. A wilful relapse, when, after a man hath solemnly vowed himself to God, he falls into a league with sin, and returns back to it, *Jer. ii. 25. I have loved strangers, and after them will I go*.

2. There is a relapse through infirmity, when the bent and resolution of a man's heart is against sin, but, through the violence of temptation, and withdrawing of God's grace, he is carried down the stream against his will. Now, though wilful and continued relapses are desperate, and do *vastare conscientiam* (as Tertul.) waste the conscience, and run men upon the precipice of damnation; yet if they are through infirmity, and we mourn for them, we may obtain forgiveness. A godly man doth not march after sin as his general, but is led captive by it; and the Lord will pity a captive-prisoner. Christ commands us to forgive a trespassing brother, seventy times seven, *Mat. xviii. 22*.

If he bids us do it, much more will he forgive a relapsing sinner in case he repent, *Jer. iii. 12. Return thou backsliding Israel, for I am merciful, saith the Lord*. It is not falling once or twice into the mire that drowns, but lying there; it is not once relapsing into sin, but lying in sin impenitently, that damns.

Obj. 4. *But God requires so much sorrow and humiliation before remission, that I fear I shall never arrive at it.*

Ans. God requires no more humiliation than may fit a soul for mercy. Many a christian thinks, because he hath not filled God's bottle so full of tears as others, therefore he is not humbled enough to receive a pardon. But we must know God's dealings are various; all have not the like pangs in the new-birth: some are won with love, the sense of God's mercy abused, causeth ingenuous tears to flow; others are more flagitious and hardened, and these God deals more roughly with. This is sure, that soul is humbled enough to receive a pardon, who is brought to a thorough sense of sin, and sees the need of a saviour, and loves him as the fairest of ten thousand: therefore be not discouraged, if thy heart be bruised for sin and broken off from it, thy sin shall be blotted out. No sooner did Ephraim fall a weeping, but God's bowels fell a working, *Jer. xxxi. 20. My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him*. Having answered these objections, let me beseech you, *above all things*, labour for the forgiveness of sin: think with yourselves how great a mercy it is; it is one of the richest jewels in the cabinet of the new covenant, *Pf. xxxi. 2. Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven*. In the Hebrew it is *blenesses*. And think with yourselves, the unparalleled misery of such whose sins are not forgiven. Such as had not the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on their door-posts, were destroyed by the angel, *Exod. xii*. So they who have not Christ's blood sprinkled on them, to wash away the guilt of sin, will fall into the gulf of perdition. And if you resolve to seek after forgiveness, do not delay.

Many say they will go about getting their pardon, but they procrastinate and put it off so long, till it be too late; when the shadows of the evening are stretched forth, and the night of death approacheth, then they begin to look after their pardon. This hath been the undoing of millions; they purpose they will look after their souls, but they stay so long till the  
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lease of mercy be run out; Oh, therefore hasten the getting of a pardon! think of the *uncertainty* of life. What security have you that you shall live another day? *Volat ambiguus mobilis alis hora*. Our life is a taper soon blown out; it is made up of a few flying minutes. O thou *dust* and *ashes*! thou mayest fear every hour to be blown into thy grave; and what if death come to arrest thee before thy pardon is sealed? *Plutarch* reports of one *Archias*, who being among his cups, one delivered to him a letter and desired him to read it presently, being about serious business; saith he, *seria cras*, I will mind serious things to morrow; and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, to morrow I will repent, I will get my pardon, thou mayst suddenly be slain; therefore *to day*, while it is called *to day*, look after the forgiveness of sin: after a while, all the conduits of mercy will be stopped, there will not be one drop of Christ's blood to be had, there is no sealing of pardons after death.

2. *Branch of exhortation*. Let us labour to have the *evidence* of pardon, to know that our sins are forgiven. A man may have his sins forgiven, and not know it; he may have a pardon in the court of heaven, when he hath it not in the court of conscience. *David's* sin was forgiven as soon as he repented. And God sent *Nathan* the prophet to tell him so, 1 *Sam.* xii. 13. But *David* did not feel the comfort of it at present: as appears by the penitential psalm composed after, *Pf.* li. 8. *Make me to hear the voice of joy*; and verse 12. *Cast me not away from thy presence*. It is one thing to be pardoned, and another thing to feel it. The evidence of pardon may not appear for a time, and this may be,

1. From the *imbecility and weakness of faith*. Forgiveness of sin is so strange and infinite a blessing, that a christian can hardly persuade himself that God will extend such a favour to him: as it is said of the apostles, when Christ appeared to them first, *they believed not for joy, and wondered*, *Luke* xxiv. 41. So the soul is so stricken with admiration, that the wonder of pardon doth almost stagger his faith.

2. A man may be pardoned, and not know it, from the *strength of temptation*. Satan accuseth the Godly of *sin*, and tells them that God doth not love them: what, should such sinners think of pardon? Believers are compared to *bruised reeds*, *Mat.* xii. 20. And temptations to winds, *Mat.* vii. 15. Now, a

reed is easily shaken with the wind. Temptations shake the Godly; and though they are pardoned, yet they know it not: *Job* in a temptation thought God his enemy, *Job* xvi. 9. Yet then he was in a pardoned condition.

Qu. But why doth God sometimes conceal the evidence of pardon?

Ans. Though God doth pardon, yet he may withhold the sense of it a while;

1. Because hereby he would lay us lower in contrition. God would have us see what an evil and bitter thing it is to offend him; we shall therefore ly the longer steeping ourselves in the brinish tears of repentance, before we have the sense of pardon, it being long before *David's broken bones* were set, and his pardon sealed, the more contrite his heart was, and this was a sacrifice God delighted in.

2. Though God doth forgive sin, yet he may deny the manifestation of it for a time, to make us prize pardon, and make it sweeter to us when it comes. The difficulty of obtaining a mercy enhanseth the value: when we have been a long time tugging at prayer for a pardon of sin, and still God withholds, but at last, after many sighs and tears, pardon comes; now we esteem it the more, and it is sweeter,-----*Quo longius defertur, eo suavius laetatur*,-----The longer mercy is in the birth, the more welcome will the deliverance be.

Let me now reassume the exhortation to labour for the evidence and sense of pardon. He who is pardoned and knows it not, is like one who hath an estate befallen him, but knows it not. Our comfort consists in the knowledge of forgiveness, *Pf.* li. 8. *Make me to hear the voice of joy*. This is a proclaiming a jubilee in the soul, when we are able to read our pardon; and to the witness of conscience God adds the witness of his spirit; in the mouth of these two witnesses our joy is confirmed: O labour for this evidence of forgiveness.

Qu. How shall we know that our sins are forgiven?

Ans. We must not be our own judges in this case, *Prov.* xxviii. 26. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. The heart is deceitful*, *Jer.* xvi. 9. And it is folly to trust a deceiver. The Lord only by his word must be judge in this case, whether we are pardoned, or no. As it was under the law, no leper might judge himself to be clean; but the priest was to pronounce him clean, *Lev.* xiii. 37. So, we are not to judge of ourselves to be clean from



the guilt of sin, till we are such as the word of God hath pronounced to be clean.

*Qu. How then shall we know by the word whether our guilt is done away and our sins pardoned?*

*Ans.* 1. The pardoned sinner is a great weeper. The sense of God's love melts his heart; that free-grace should ever look upon me; that such crimson sins should be washed away in Christ's blood! this makes the heart melt, and the eyes drop with tears; never did any man read his pardon with dry eyes, *Luke vii. 38. She stood at his feet weeping*; her heart was a spiritual limbeck, out of which those tears were distilled. *Mary's* tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment: her eyes which before did sparkle with lust, whose amorous glances had set on fire her lovers; now she makes them a fountain, and washeth Christ's feet with her tears. She was a true penitent, and had her pardon, *v. 47. Wherefore, I say, her sins, which were many, are forgiven.* A pardon will make the hardest heart relent, and cause the stony heart to bleed: and, is it thus with us? Have we been dissolved into tears for sin? God seals his pardon upon melting hearts.

2. We may know our sins are forgiven, by having the grace of faith infused, *Acts x. 43. To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins.* In saving faith there are two things, abrenunciation, and recumbency: 1. *Abrenunciation*: a man renounceth all opinion of himself, digged out of his own burrough; he is quite taken off himself, *Phil. iii. 9.* He sees all his duties are but broken reeds; though he could weep a sea of tears; though he had all the grace of men and angels, it could not purchase his pardon. 2. *Recumbency*. Faith is an assent with assistance: the soul doth get hold of Christ, as *Adonijah* did of the horns of the altar, *1 Kings i. 15.* Faith casts itself upon the stream of Christ's blood, and faith, *If I perish, I perish.* If we have but the *minimum quod sic*, the last drahm of this precious faith, we have something to shew for pardon. *To him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sin.* 1. This faith is acceptable to God, it pleaseth God more than offering up *ten thousand rivers of oil*, than working miracles, than martyrdom, or the highest acts of obedience. 2. Faith is profitable to us; it is our best certificate to shew for pardon: no

sooner doth faith reach forth its hand to receive Christ, but Christ sets his hand to our pardon.

3. *Sign.* The pardoned soul is a god-admirer, *Micah vii. 18. Who is a God like thee, that pardonest iniquity?* O that God should ever look upon me, I was a sinner, and nothing but a sinner, yet obtained mercy? Who is a God like thee? Mercy hath been despised, yet that mercy should save me: Christ hath been crucified by me, yet his cross crowns me. God hath displayed the ensigns of grace, he hath set up his mercy above my sin, nay, in spite of it this causeth admiration, *Who is a God like thee?* A man that goes over a narrow bridge in the night, and the next morning comes and sees the danger he was in, and how miraculously he escaped, he is stricken with admiration: so, when God shews a soul how near he was a-falling into hell, and how that this gulph is shut, all his sins are pardoned, he is amazed, and cries out, *Who is a God like thee that pardonest iniquity?* That God should pardon one, and pass by another; *one taken, another left*; this fills the soul with wonder and astonishment.

4. Wherever God pardons sin, he subdues it, *Micah vii. 17. He will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquity.* Where mens persons are justified, their lusts are mortified. There is in sin *vis imperatoria & damnatoria*, a commanding power, and a condemning. Then is the condemning power of sin taken away, when the commanding power of it is taken away. When we know whether our sins are forgiven, are they subdued? If a malefactor be in prison, how shall he know that his prince hath pardoned him? If the jaylor come and knock off his chains and fetters, and lets him out of prison, then he may know he is pardoned: so, how shall we know God hath pardoned us? If the fetters of sin be broken off, and we walk at liberty in the ways of God, *Pf. cxix. 55. I will walk at liberty*; this is a blessed sign we are pardoned.

Such as are washed in Christ's blood from their guilt, are made kings to God, *Rev. i. 6.* As kings they rule over their sins.

5. He whose sins are forgiven, is full of love to God. *Mary Magdalene's* heart was fired with love, *Luke vii. 47. Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.* Her love was not the cause of her remission, but a sign of it. A pardoned soul is a monument of mercy, and he thinks he can never love God

God enough; he wishes he had a coal from God's altar, to inflame his heart in love; he wisheth he could borrow the wings of the cherubims, that he might fly swifter in obedience: a pardoned soul is sick of love. He whose heart is like marble, lockt up in impenitency, that doth not melt in love, a sign his pardon is yet to seal.

6. Where the sin is pardoned, the nature is purified, *Hof. xiv. 9. I will heal their backslidings, I will lovethem.* Every man, by nature, is both guilty and diseased: where God remits the guilty, he cures the disease, *Pf. ciii. 3. Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.* Herein God's pardon goes beyond the king's pardon; the king may forgive a malefactor, but he cannot change his heart, he may have a thievish heart still: but God, when he pardons, changeth the heart, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart also will I give you.* A pardoned soul is adorned and embellish with holiness, *1 John v. 6. This is he that came by water and blood.* Where Christ comes with blood to justify, he comes with water to cleanse, *Zech. iii. 4. I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.* I will cause thy iniquity to pass from thee, there is *pardoning* grace; and I will clothe thee with change of raiment, there is *sanctifying* grace: let not him say, he hath pardon, that wants grace. Many tell us, they hope they are pardoned, but were never sanctified; yea, but they believe in Christ: but what faith is it? A swearing faith, a whoring faith; the faith of devils is as good.

7. Such as are in the number of God's people, forgiveness of sin belongs to them, *Isa. xl. 1. Comfort ye my people, tell them their iniquity is forgiven.*

Qu. How shall we know that we are God's elect people?

Ans. By three characters.

1. God's people are an humble people, the livery which all Christ's people wear, is humility, *1 Pet. v. 5. Be ye clothed with humility.* 1. A sight of God's glory humbles: *Elijah* wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed by, *Job xlii. 5. Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself.* The stars vanish when the sun appears. 2. A sight of sin humbles. In the glass of the word the Godly see their spots, and these are humbling spots. Lo, faith the soul, I can call nothing my own but sins and wants; this humbles. An humble

sinner is in a better condition than a proud angel.

2. God's people are a willing people: *Pf. cx. 3. A people of willingness:* love constrains them: they serve God freely, and out of choice. They stick at no service; they will run through a sea, and a wilderness; they will follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth.

3. They are an heavenly people, stars, *John xvii. 16. Ye are not of the world* As the *primum mobile* in the heavens hath a motion of its own, contrary to the other orbs; so God's people have an heavenly motion of soul, contrary to the men of the world: they use the world as their servant, but do not follow the world as their master, *Phil. iii. 20. Our conversation is in heaven.* Such as have these three characters of God's people, have a good certificate to shew that they are pardoned. Forgiveness of sin belongs to them; *comfort ye my people, tell them their iniquity is forgiven.*

8. A sign we are pardoned, if after many storms we have a sweet calm and peace within, *Rom. v. 1. Being justified we have peace.* After many a bitter tear shed, and heart-breaking, the mind hath been more sedate, and a sweet serenity or still music hath followed; this brings tidings, God is appeased: whereas, before conscience did accuse, now it doth secretly whisper comfort: this is a blessed evidence a man's sins are pardoned. If the bailiffs do not trouble and arrest the debtor, it is a sign his debt is compounded or forgiven; so, if conscience do not vex or accuse, but upon good grounds whisper consolation, this is a sign the debt is discharged, the sin is forgiven.

9. A sign sin is forgiven, when we have hearts without guile, *Pf. xxxii. 1. 2. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

Qu. What is this to be sine fuso, without guile.

1. He who is without guile, hath plainness of heart: he is without collusion, he hath not *cor duplex*, a double heart; his heart is right with God. A man may do a right action, but not with a right heart, *2 Chron. xxv. 2. Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.* To have the heart right with God, is to serve God with a right principle, *love*; by a right rule, the words; to a right end, the *glory of God.*

2. An heart without guile dares not allow itself



itself in the least sin; he avoids secret sins. He dares not hide any sin, as *Rachel* did her father's images, under her, *Gen. xxxi. 34*. He knows God sees him, which is more than if men and angels did behold him. He avoids complexion-sins, *Pf. xviii. 23*. *I was also upright before him, and kept my self from my iniquity*. As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin. An heart without guile takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through his beloved sin.

3. An heart without guile desires to know the whole mind and will of God. An unsound heart is afraid of the light, *lucifuga*, he is not willing to know his duty. A sincere soul saith, as *Job xxxiv. 32*. *What I know not, teach thou me*: Lord shew me what is my duty, and wherein I offend; let me not sin for want of light; what I know not, teach thou me.

4. An heart without guile is uniform in religion: he hath an equal eye to all God's commands. 1. He takes conscience of private duties; he worships God in his closet as well as in the temple. *Job i. 5*. When he was alone, wrestled with the angels, *Gen. xxii. 12*. So a Christian, when he is alone, wrestles with God in prayer, and will not let him go till he hath blessed him. 2. He performs difficult duties, wherein the heart and spirit of religion lie, and which do cross flesh and blood: he is much in self-humbling and self-examining. *Utitur speculis magis quam per specillis*, *Senec.* He rather useth the looking glass of the word to look into his own heart, than the broad spectacles of censure to spy the faults of others.

5. An heart without guile is true to God's interest. He grieves to see it go ill with the church. *Nehemiah*, though the king's cup-bearer, and wine so near, yet was sad when *Zion's* glory was eclipsed, *Neh. ii. 3*. Like the tree I have read of, if any of the leaves are cut, the rest of the leaves begin to shrink up themselves, and for a time to hang down the head; so a sincere soul, when God's church suffers, feels himself as it were touched in his own person. 2. He rejoiceth to see the cause of God get ground; to see truth triumph, piety lift up his head, and the flowers of Christ's crown flourish. This is an heart without guile, it is loyal and true to God's interest.

6. An heart without guile is just in his dealings: as he is upright in his words, so he is upright in his weights. He makes conscience

of the second table as well as the first: he is for equity as well as piety, 1 *Thes. iv. 6*. *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter*. A sincere heart thinks he may as well rob as defraud: his rule is *to do to others what he would have them do to him*, *Mat. vii. 12*.

7. An heart without guile is true in his promises: his word is as good as his bond. If he hath made a promise, though it be to his prejudice, and doth entrench upon his profit, he will not go back. The hypocrite plays fast and loose, flees from his word; there is no more binding him with oaths and promises, than *Samson* could be bound with green withs, *Judges xvi. 7*. A sincere soul saith as *Jephtha*, *Judges xi. 3, 5*. *I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back*.

8. An heart without guile is faithful in his friendship: he is what he pretends; his heart goes along with his tongue, as a well-made dial goes with the sun. He cannot flatter and hate, commend and censure. Counterfeiting of love is hypocrisy. It is too usual to betray with a kiss, 2 *Sam. xx. 9*. *Joab took Abner by the beard to kiss him, and smote him in the fifth rib that he died*. Many deceive with sugar words. Physicians use to judge of the health of the body by the tongue; if that look well, the body is in health: but we cannot judge of friendship by the tongue; the words may be full of honey, when the heart hath the gall of malice: sure his heart is not true to God, who is treacherous to his friend. Thus you see what an heart without guile is: now, to have such an heart is a sign sin is pardoned; *God will not impute sin to him in whose spirit there is no guile*. What a blessed thing is this, not to have sin imputed? If our sins be not imputed, it is as if we had no sin: sins remitted, are as if they had not been committed: this is the blessing belongs to a sincere soul, God imputes not iniquity to him in whose spirit is no guile.

9. He whose sins are forgiven, is willing to forgive others who have offended him, *Eph. iv. 32*. *Forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*. An hypocrite will read, come to church, give alms build hospitals, but cannot forgive wrongs, he will rather want forgiveness from God than he will forgive his enemies. A pardoned soul argues thus, hath God been so good to me, to forgive me my sins, and shall not I imitate him in this? Hath he forgiven me pounds, and shall I not forgive pence. It is noted of *Crammer*, *nil oblivisci solet praeter*

*praeter injurias*, Cicero. He was of a forgiving spirit, and would do offers of love to them that had injured him; like the sun which having drawn up black vapours from the earth returns them back in sweet showers.

By this touch-stone we may try whether our sins are pardoned; we need not climb up into heaven to see whether our sins be forgiven, but let us look into our hearts; are we of forgiving spirits? Can we bury injuries, requite good for evil? A good sign we are forgiven of God. If we can find all these things wrought in our souls, they are happy signs that our sins are pardoned, and are good letters testimonial to shew for heaven.

Use 3. *Consolation*. I shall open a box of cordials, and shew you some of the glorious privileges of a pardoned condition. This is a peculiar favour, it is a spring shut up, broached for none but the elect. The wicked may have forbearing mercy, but only an elect person hath forgiving mercy. Forgiveness of sin makes way for solid joy, Isa. xl. 1. *comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem*: or, as in the Hebrew, *speak to her heart*----What was this must cheer her heart? *Tell her that her iniquity is pardoned*: if any thing would comfort her, the Lord knew it was this. When Christ would cheer the palsy man, *Mat. ix. 2. Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee*. It was a greater comfort to have his sins forgiven, than to have his palsy healed. This made David put on his best cloaths, and anoint himself, *2 Sam. xii. 20*. It was strange, his child was newly dead, and God had told him *the sword should not depart from his house*; yet now he spruceth up himself, he puts on his best clothes, and anoints himself: whence was this? David had heard good news; God sent his pardon by Nathan the prophet, *2 Sam. xii. 13. The Lord hath put away thy sin*. This could not but revive his heart, and in token of joy he anoints himself. Philo saith, it was an opinion of some of the Philosophers, that among the heavenly spheres there was such sweet harmonious melody, that if the sound of it could reach our ears, it would affect us with wonder and delight. Sure he who is pardoned hath such a divine melody in his soul, as doth replenish him with infinite delight. When Christ had said to Mary Magdalene, *thy sins are forgiven*; he presently adds, *go in peace*, Luke vii. 50. More particularly,

1. *Comfort*. God looks upon a pardoned soul as if he had never sinned. As the cancelling a bond nulls the bond, and makes it as if the money had never been owing, forgiving sin makes it not to be. Where sin is remitted, it is as if it had not been committed, *Jer. l. 20*. So that, as Rachel wept because her children were not, so a child of God may rejoice because his sins are not. God looks upon him as if he had never offended: though sin remain in him after pardon, yet God doth not look upon him as a sinner, but as a just man.

2. *Comfort*. God having pardoned sin, will pass an act of oblivion, *Jer. xxx. 34. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*. When a creditor hath crossed the book, he doth not call for the debt again. God will not reckon with the sinner in a judicial way. When our sins are laid upon the head of Christ, our scape-goat, they are carried into a land of forgetfulness.

3. *Comfort*. The pardoned soul is for ever secured from the wrath of God. How terrible is God's wrath? *Pf. xc. 11. Who knows the power of thine anger*? If a spark of God's wrath when it lights into a man's conscience, fills it with such horror, (as in the case of *Spiray*) then, what is it to be always scorching in that torrid zone, to lie upon beds of flames? Now, from this avenging wrath of God every pardoned soul is freed: though he may taste of the bitter cup of affliction, yet he shall never drink of the sea of God's wrath, *Rom. v. 9. Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*. Christ's blood quencheth the flames of hell.

4. *Comfort*. Sin being pardoned, conscience hath no more authority to accuse. Conscience roars against the unpardoned sinners, but it hath nothing to do to terrify or accuse him that is pardoned. God hath discharged the sinner, and if the creditor discharge the debtor, what hath the serjeant to do to arrest him? The truth is, if God absolve, conscience if rightly informed, absolves; if once God saith thy sins are pardoned, conscience saith, *go in peace*. If the sky be clear, and no storms blow there, then the sea is calm; if all be clear above, and God shine with pardoning mercy upon the soul, then conscience is calm and serene.

5. *Comfort*. Nothing that befalls a pardoned soul shall hurt him, *Pf. xci. 10. No evil shall touch thee*; that is, no destructive evil. Every thing to a wicked man is hurtful. Good things



are for his hurt. His very blessings are turned into a curse, *Mal. ii. 2. I will curse your blessings. Riches and prosperity do him hurt. They are not manna, but insidia, Sen. Golden snares, Eccl. v. 13. Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. Like Haman's banquet, which did usher in his funeral. Ordinances do a sinner hurt; they are a savour of death, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Cordials themselves kill. The best things hurt the wicked, but the worst things which befall a pardoned soul shall do him no hurt: the sting, the poison, the curse is gone; his soul is no more hurt, than David hurt Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment.*

6. To a pardoned soul, every thing hath a commission to do him good. *Afflictions shall do him good; poverty reproach, persecution, Gen. 1. 20. Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.* As the elements, though of contrary qualities, yet God hath so tempered them that they work for the good of the universe; so the most cross providences shall work for good to a pardoned soul. Correction shall be a correlative to eat out sin; it shall cure the swelling of pride, the fever of lust, the drop of avarice. It shall be a refining fire to purify grace, and make it sparkle as gold. Even from providence, to a pardoned soul, shall be like Paul's crocodile or cross-wind, *Acts xviii.* which, though it broke the ship, yet Paul was brought to shore upon the broken pieces.

7. A pardoned soul is not only exempted from wrath, but invested with dignity; as Joseph was not only freed from prison, but advanced to be a second man in the kingdom.

A pardoned soul is made a favourite of heaven. A king may pardon a traitor, but will not make him one of his privy-council; but whom God pardons, he receives into favour. I may say to him, as the angel to the virgin Mary, Luke i. 30. *Thou hast found favour with God.* Hence such as are forgiven, are said to be crowned with loving-kindness, *Pf. ciii. 3, 4. Whom God pardons he crowns.* Whom God absolves, he marries himself to, *Jer. iii. 12. I am merciful, and I will not keep anger for ever; there is forgiveness: and in the 14th verse, I am married to you:* and he who is matched into the crown of heaven, is as rich as the angels; as rich as heaven can make him.

8. Sin being pardoned, we may come with humble boldness to God in prayer, guilt makes us afraid to go to God. Adam having sinned, *Gen. iii. 10. I was afraid, and hid myself.* Guilt

clips the wings of prayer, it fills the face with blushing: but forgiveness breeds confidence; we may look upon God as a father of mercy, holding forth a golden sceptre: he that hath got his pardon, can look upon his prince with comfort.

9. Forgiveness of sin makes our services acceptable; God takes all we do in good part. A guilty person, nothing he doth pleaseth God. His prayer is turned into sin; but when sin is pardoned, now God accepts our offering. We read of Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord? *Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, Zech. iii. 3.* That is, he was guilty of diverse sins: now, saith the Lord, *ver. 5. Take away his filthy garments, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee:* and then he stood and ministered before the Lord, and his services were accepted.

10. Forgiveness of sin is the sauce which sweetens all the comforts of this life. As guilt embitters our comforts, it puts worm-wood into our cup; so, pardon of sin sweetens all, it is like sugar to wine. Health and pardon, estate and pardon relieth well. Pardon of sin gives a sanctified title, and a delicious taste to every comfort. As Naaman said to Gehazi, *2 Kings v. 23. Take two talents;* so saith God to the pardoned soul, take two talents, take the vnnison, and take a blessing with it; take the oil in the cruse, and take my love with it: *take two talents.* It is observable, Christ joins these two together, *Give us our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses:* as if Christ would teach us, there is little comfort in daily bread, unless sin be forgiven. Forgiveness doth perfume and drop sweetness in every earthly enjoyment.

11. If sin be forgiven, God will never upbraid us with our former sins. When the Prodigal came home to his father, the father received him into his loving embraces, and never mentioned his former luxury, or spending his estate among harlots: so God will not upbraid us with former sins; nay, he will intirely love us, we shall be his jewels, and he will put us in his bosom. Mary Magdalen a pardoned penitent, after Christ arose, he appeared first to her, *Mark xvi. 9.* so far was Christ from upbraiding her, that he brings her the first news of his resurrection.

12. Sin being pardoned, is a pillar of support in the loss of dear friends. God hath taken away thy child, thy husband; but withall, he hath taken away thy sins. He hath given thee more

more than he hath taken away ; he hath taken away a flower, and given thee a jewel. He hath given thee Christ and the spirit, and the earnest of glory. He hath given thee more than he hath taken away.

13. Where God pardons sins, he bestows righteousness. With remission of sin goes imputation of *righteousness*, *Ista. lxi. 10. I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*. If a Christian can take any comfort in his inherent righteousness, which is so stained and mixed with sin, O then what comfort may he take in Christ's righteousness, which is a better righteousness than that of *Adam*? *Adam's* righteousness was mutable; but suppose it had been unchangeable, yet it was but the righteousness of a *man*: but that righteousness which is imputed, is the righteousness of him who is God, *2 Cor. v. 21. That we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. O blessed privilege, to be reputed, in the sight of God, righteous as Christ, having his embroidered robe put upon the soul ! this is the comfort of every one that is pardoned, he hath a perfect righteousness; and now God saith of him, *thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee*, *Cant. iv. 7*.

14. A pardoned soul needs not fear death. He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith. To a pardoned soul death hath lost his sting. Death, to a pardoned sinner, is like the arresting a man after the debt is paid, death may arrest, but Christ will shew the debt-book crossed in his blood. A pardoned soul may triumph over death, *O death, where is thy sting ! O grave, where is thy victory !* he who is pardoned needs not fear death, it is not a destruction, but a deliverance: it is to him a day of jubilee or release, it releaseth him from all his sins. Death comes to a pardoned soul, as the angel did to *Peter*, it smote him, and beat off his chains, and carried him out of prison; so doth death to him who is pardoned, it smites his body, and the chains of sin fall off. Death gives a pardoned soul a *quietus est*, it frees him from all his labours, *Rev. xiv. 13. Felix transitus a labore ad requiem*, *Bern*. Death, as it will wipe off our tears, so it will wipe off our sweat. Death will do a pardoned Christian the greatest good turn, therefore it is made a part of the inventory, *1 Cor. iii. 22. Death is yours*. Death is like the waggon which was sent for old

*Jacob*, it came rattling with its wheels, but it was to carry *Jacob* to his son *Joseph*; so the wheels of death's chariot may rattle, and make a noise, but they are to carry a believer to Christ. While a believer is here, he is absent from the Lord, *2 Cor. v. 6*. He lives far from court, and cannot see him whom his soul loves: but death gives him a sight of the king of glory, *in whose presence is fulness of joy*. To a pardoned soul, death is *transitus ad regnum*; it removes him to the place of bliss, where he shall hear the triumphs and anthems of praise sung in the choir of angels. No cause hath a pardoned soul to fear death; what needs he fear to have his body buried in the earth, who hath his sins buried in Christ's wounds? What hurt can death do to him? It is but his ferry-man to ferry him over to the land of promise. The day of death to a pardoned soul, is his ascension-day to heaven, his coronation day, when he shall be crowned with those delights of paradise, which are unspeakable and full of glory. Thus you see the rich consolations which belong to a pardoned sinner; well might *David* proclaim him blessed, *Pf. xxxii. 1. Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven*; in the Hebrew it is in the plural, *blessednesses*. Here is a plurality of blessings. Forgiveness of sin is like the first link of a chain, which draws all the links after it; it draws these fourteen privileges after it: it crowns with grace and glory. Who then would not labour to have his sins forgiven? *Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered*.

Now follow the duties of such as have their sins forgiven.----Mercy calls for duty. Be much in praise and doxology, *Pf. ciii*.

1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thy iniquities*. Hath God crowned you with pardoning mercy, set the crown of your praise upon the head of free-grace. Pardon of sin is a *discriminating* mercy, a jewel hung only upon the elect, this calls for acclamations of praise. You will give thanks for daily bread, and will you not much more for pardon? You will give thanks for deliverance from sickness, and will you not from deliverance from hell? God hath done more for you in forgiving your sin, than if he had given you a kingdom. And that you may be more thankful, let but set the unpardoned condition before your eyes: how sad is it to want a pardon? All the curses of the law stand in full force against such an one. The unpardoned sinner dying, drops into the grave and hell both at once; he must quar-



ter among the damned; and will not this make you thankful, that this is not your condition, but that you are *delivered from the wrath to come*?

2. Let God's pardoning love inflame your hearts with love to God. For God to pardon freely, without any desert of yours, to pardon so many offences, that he should pardon you, and pass by others; that he should take you out of the ruins of mankind, and, of a clod of dust and sin, make you a jewel sparkling with heavenly glory; will not this make you love God much? Three prisoners that deserve to die, if the king pardon one of these, and leave the other two to the severity of the law, will not he that is pardoned love his prince, who hath been so full of clemency? How should your hearts be endeared in love to God? The schoolmen distinguish of a twofold love, *Amor gratuitus*, a love of bounty; that is, God's love to us in forgiving; and *amor debitus*, a love of duty; that is, our love to God by way of retaliation. We should shew our love by admiring God, by sweetly solacing ourselves in him, and binding ourselves to him in a perpetual covenant.

3. Let the sense of God's love in forgiving, make you more cautious and fearful of sin for the future, *Pf. cxxx. 4. There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.* O fear to offend this God, who hath been so gracious to you in forgiving. If a friend hath done a kindness for us, we will not disoblige him, or abuse his love. After *Nathan* had told *David*, *The Lord hath put away thy sin*; how tender was *David's* conscience? How fearful was he of staining his soul with the guilt of more blood? *Pf. li. 14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.* Men committing gross sins after pardon, God changeth his carriage towards them, he turns his smile into a frown; they ly, as *Jonah* in the belly of hell: God's wrath falls into their conscience, as a drop of scalding lead into the eye; the promises are as a fountain sealed, not a drop of comfort comes from them. O christian, do you not remember what it cost you before to get your pardon? How long it was before your broken bones were set; and will you again venture to sin? You may be in such a condition, that you may question whether you belong to God or no; though God doth not damn you, he may send you to hell in this life.

4. If God hath given you good hope that you are pardoned, walk cheerfully, *Rom. v. 11. We*

*joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.* Who should rejoice, if not he that hath his pardon? God rejoiceth when he shews us mercy; and should not we rejoice when we receive mercy? in the saddest times a pardoned soul may rejoice. Afflictions have a commission to do good, every cross wind of providence shall blow him nearer to the haven of glory. Christian, God hath pulled off your prison fetters, and clothed you with the robe of righteousness, and crowned you with loving-kindness, and yet art thou sad, *Rom. v. 2. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Can the wicked rejoice who have only a short reprove from hell, and not they who have a full pardon sealed?

5. Hath God pardoned you? Do all the service you can for God, *1 Cor. xv. 58. Always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Let your head study for God, let your hands work for him, let your tongue be the organ of his praise. *Paul* got his pardon, *1 Tim. i. 16. I obtained mercy*; and this was as oil to the wheels, it made him move faster in obedience, *1 Cor. xv. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all.* *Paul's* obedience did not move slow, as the sun on the dial; but swiftly, as the sun in the firmament. *He did spend, and was spent for Christ.* The pardoned soul thinks he can never love God enough, or serve him enough.

The last thing is to lay down some rules or directions, how we may obtain forgiveness of sin.

1. We must take heed of mistakes about pardon of sin.

1st. Mistake, that our sins are pardoned, when they are not.

Qu. Whence is this mistake?

Ans. From two grounds.

1. Because God is merciful.

Ans. God's being merciful, shews, that a man's sins are pardonable. But there is a great deal of difference between sins pardonable and sins pardoned; thy sins may be pardonable, yet not pardoned. Though God be merciful, yet, who is God's mercy for? Not for the presuming sinner, but the repenting sinner. Such as go on in sin, cannot lay claim to it. God's mercy is like the ark, none but the priests might touch the ark; none but such as are spiritual priests, sacrificing their sins, may touch this ark of God's mercy.

2. Because Christ died for their sins, therefore they are forgiven.

Ans.

*Ans.* That Christ died for remission of sin is true; but, that therefore all have remission, is false; then Judas should be forgiven. Remission is limited to believers, *Acts* xiii. 39. *By him all that believe are justified*; but all do not believe; some slight and trample Christ's blood under foot, *Heb.* x. 29. So that, notwithstanding Christ's death, all are not pardoned. Take heed of this dangerous mistake. Who will seek after pardon, that thinks he hath it already?

2d. *Mistake*, That pardon is easy to be had; it is but a sigh, or Lord have mercy; but, how dearly hath pardon cost them who have obtained it? How long was it ere David's broken bones were set? Happy we, if we have the pardon of sin sealed, though at the very last hour: but, why do men think pardon of sin so easy to be obtained? Their sins are but *small*, therefore *venial*. The devil holds the small end of the perspective glass before their eyes. But, *first*, There is no sin small, being against a Deity. Why is he punished with death, that clips the king's coin, or defaceth his statue, but because it is an abuse offered to the person of the king? *Secondly*, little sins, when multiplied, become great; a little sum, when *multiplied*, comes to millions. What is less than a grain of sand, but, when the sand is multiplied, what heavier? *Thirdly*, thy sins cost no small price. View thy sins in the glass of Christ's sufferings; Christ did veil his glory, lose his joy, and pour out his soul an offering for the least sin. *Fourthly*, little sins, unrepented of, will damn thee, as well as greater. Not only great rivers fall into the sea, but little brooks; not only greater sins carry men to hell, but lesser: therefore do not think pardon easy, because sin is small; beware of mistakes.

2. The second means for pardon of sin, is, see yourselves guilty; come to God as condemned men, *1 Kings* xx. 32. *They put ropes upon their heads and came to the king of Israel*. Let us come to God in profound humility: say not thus, Lord, my heart is good, and my life blameless; God hates this. Lye in the dust, be covered with sackcloth; say as the centurion, *Mat.* viii. 8. *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof*; I deserve not the least smile from heaven. This is the way for pardon.

3. The third means for pardon is, hearty confession of sin, *Pf.* xxxii. 5. *I confessed my sin, and thou forgavest me*. Would we have God When we accuse ourselves, God absolves us.

cover our sins, we must discover them, *1 John* i. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive them*. One would have thought it should have run thus, if we confess our sins he is *merciful* to forgive them; nay, but he is just to forgive them. Why just? Because he hath bound himself by a promise to forgive an humble confessor of sin. *Cum accusat. excusat*; Tertul. We are apt to hide our sins, *Job* xxxi. 33. Which is as great a folly as for one to hide his disease from the physician; but when we open our sins to God by confessing, he opens his mercy to us by forgiving.

4. Means for pardon, sound repentance: repentance and remission are put together, *Luke* xxiv. 47. There is a promise of a fountain opened for the washing away the guilt of sin, *Zech.* xiii. 1. But see what goes before, *Zech.* xii. 20. *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him*, *Isa.* i. 16. *Wash ye, make ye clean*; that is, wash in the waters of repentance; and then follows a promise of forgiveness, *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow*. It is easy to turn white into scarlet, but not so easy to turn scarlet into white: yet, upon repentance, God hath promised to make the scarlet sinner of a milk-like whiteness.

*Caution*. Not that repentance *merits* pardon, but it prepares for it. We set our seal on the wax when it melts: God seals his pardons on melting hearts.

5. Means, faith in the blood of Christ. It is Christ's blood washeth away sin, *Rev.* i. 6. But this blood will not wash away sin, unless it be *applied* by faith. The apostle speaks of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, *1 Pet.* i. 2. Many are not pardoned, though Christ's blood be shed, because it is not sprinkled; now it is faith that sprinkles Christ's blood on the soul, for the remission of sin. As Thomas put his hands into Christ's sides, *John* xx. 27. So faith puts its hand into Christ's wounds, and takes of the blood and sprinkles it upon the conscience, for the washing away of guilt. Hence in scripture, we are said to obtain pardon through faith, *Acts* xiii. 49. *By him all that believe are justified*, *Luke* vii. 48. *Thy sins are forgiven*. Whence was this. *v.* 50. *Thy faith hath saved thee*. O let us labour for faith: Christ is a propitiation or atonement to take away sin; but how? *Through faith in his blood*, *Rom.* iii. 25.

6. Means, pray much for pardon, *Hos.* xiv.

2. *Take away all iniquity*, *Luke* xviii. 13. *The*



*Publican smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* And the text saith, *He went away justified.* Many pray for health, riches, children; but Christ hath taught us what to pray for chiefly, *Remitte nobis debita nostra: Forgive us our sins.* And be earnest suiters for pardon; consider what guilt of sin is; it binds one over to the wrath of God; better thy house were haunted with devils, than thy soul with guilt. He who is in the bond of iniquity, must needs be in the gall of bitterness, Acts viii. 23. A guilty soul wears Cain's mark, which was a trembling at the heart, and a shaking in his flesh; guilt makes the sinner afraid, lest every trouble he meets with should arrest him, and bring him to judgment. If guilt be so dismal, and breeds such convulsion-fits in the conscience, how earnest should we be in prayer, that God would remove this guilt, and so earnest, as to resolve to take no denial! Plead hard with God for pardon, as a man would plead with a judge for his life. Fall upon thy knees, say, Lord, hear one word. Why, may God say, what canst thou say for thyself, that thou shouldest not die? Lord, I can say but little, but I put in my surety, Christ shall answer for me; O look upon that blood which speaks better things than that of Abel; Christ is my priest, his blood is my sacrifice, his divine nature is my altar. As *Rahab* was to shew the scarlet thread in the window, and

when *Joshua* saw it, he did not destroy her, *Josh.* ii. 18. 21. and vi. 22, 23. So shew the Lord the scarlet thread of Christ's blood, and that is the way to have mercy. But, will God say, why should I pardon thee, thou hast no-wise obliged me? But, Lord, pardon me, because thou hast promised it; I urge thy covenant. When a man is to die by the law, he calls for his book; so say, Lord, let me have the benefit of my book: thy word saith, *If the sinner forsake his evil way thou wilt pardon abundantly,* Isa. xliii. 25. Lord, I have forsaken my sin, let me therefore have mercy; I plead the benefit of the book. But, for whose sake should I pardon? Thou canst not deserve it. Lord, for thy own name sake; thou hast said, thou wilt blot out sin, for thy own name sake, Isa. xliii. 25. 'Twill be no eclipsing to thy crown; how will thy mercy shine forth, and all thy other attributes ride in triumph, if thou shalt pardon me! Thus plead with God in prayer, and resolve not to give him over till thy pardon be sealed. God cannot deny importunity; he delights in mercy. As the mother, saith *Chrysostom*, delights to have her breast milked, so God delights to milk out the breast of mercy to the sinner. These means being used will procure this great blessedness, the forgiveness of sin. Thus I have done with the first part of this fifth petition, *Forgive us our sins*; I come to the second part of the petition, *As we forgive our debtors.*

MATTH. vi. 12. *As we forgive our Debtors: Or, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

**I** Proceed to the second part of the petition, *As we forgive them that trespass against us.*

*As we forgive.*] This word, *As*, is not a note of equality, but similitude; not that we equal God in forgiving, but imitate him.

This great duty of forgiving others, is a crossing the stream; 'tis contrary to flesh and blood. Men forget kindnesses, but remember injuries. But it is an indispensable duty to forgive; we are not bound to trust an enemy; but we are bound to forgive him. We are naturally prone to revenge. Revenge (saith *Homer*) is sweet as dropping honey. The heathen philosophers held revenge lawful. *Ulcisci te laceffitus potes*, Cicero. But we learn better things out of the oracles of scripture, *Mark* xi. 25. *if then ye stand*

*praying, forgive.* Matth. v. 44. Col. iii. 13. *If a man hath a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Qu. 1. *How can we forgive others, when it is only God forgives sin?*

Ans. In every breach of the second table, there are two things; an offence against God, and a trespass against man: so far as it is an offence against God, only he can forgive; but so far as it is a trespass against man, so we may forgive.

Qu. 2. *When do we forgive others?*

Ans. When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; if it be in our power to do our enemies mischief, we will not; we wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, we pray for them, we seek reconciliation with them, we shew

shew ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them; this is gospel-forgiving.

Obj. 1. *But I have been much injured and abused, and to put it up will be a stain to my reputation.*

Ans. 1. To pass by an injury without revenge, is no eclipsing one's credit; the scripture saith, *Prov. xix. 11. It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression.* 'Tis more honour to bury an injury, than revenge it: wrathfulness denotes weakness; a noble heroic spirit overlooks a petty offence.

2. Suppose a man's credit should be impaired with those whose censure is not to be valued; yet consider the folly of challenging another to a duel, 'tis little wisdom for a man to redeem his credit by losing his life, and to run to hell to be counted valorous.

Obj. 2. *But the wrong he hath done me is great.*

Ans. But thy not forgiving him is a greater wrong; he in injuring thee hath offended against a man, but thou in not forgiving him offendest against God.

Obj. 3. *But if I forgive one injury, I shall occasion more.*

Ans. If the more injuries thou forgivest, the more thou meetest with, this will make *thy grace shine the more*. Often forgiving will add more to the weight of his sin, and to the weight of thy glory. If any say, I strive to excel in other graces, but as for this of forgiving, I cannot do it, I desire in this to be excused; what dost thou talk of other graces? the graces are *inter se connexæ*, linked and chained together; where there is one, there is all: he that cannot forgive, his grace is counterfeited, his faith is fancy, his devotion is hypocrisy.

Qu. 3. *But suppose another hath wronged me in my estate, may not I go to law for my debt?*

Ans. Yes, else what use were there of law-courts? God hath set judges to decide cases in law, and to give every one his right. It is with going to law, as it is with going to war; when the just rights of a nation are invaded, here it is lawful to go to war: so, when a man's estate is trespassed upon by another, he may go to law to recover it. But the law must be used in the *last place*, when no entreaties or arbitrators will prevail, then the chancery must decide it. Yet this is no revenge, it is not so much to injure another, as to right one's self; this may be, yet one may live in charity.

Use 1. Here is a bill of indictment against such as study revenge, and cannot put up the least discourtesy. They would have God forgive them, but they will not forgive others: they will pray, come to church, give alms; but, as Christ said, *Mark x. 21. Yet lackest thou one thing*; they lack a forgiving spirit, they will rather want forgiveness from God, than they will forgive their brother. How sad is it, that, for every *slight wrong*, or *disgraceful word*, men should let malice boil in their hearts? would there be so many duels, arrests, murders, if men had the art of forgiving? Revenge is the proper sin of the devil; he is no drunkard, or adulterer, but this old serpent is full of the poison of malice: and what shall we say to them who make *profession of religion*, yet, instead of *forgiving*, pursue others *despightfully*? It was prophesied, *the wolf should dwell with the lamb*, *Isa. xi. 6*. But what shall we say, when such as profess to be lambs become wolves? These open the mouths of the prophane against religion; they will say, these are as full of rancour as any. O whither is love and mercy fled? If the Son of man did come, should he find *charity on the earth*? I fear but little. Such as but cherish anger and malice in their hearts, and will not forgive, how can they pray, *Forgive us, as we forgive others*? Either they must omit this petition (as *Chrysostom* saith, some did in his time) or else they pray against themselves.

Use 2. Let it *persuade* us all, as ever we *hope for salvation*, to pass by petty injuries and discourtesies, and labour to be of forgiving spirits, *Col. iii. 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.*

Herein we resemble God. He is *ready to forgive*, *Pf. lxxxvi. 5*. He befriends his enemies; he opens his hands to relieve them, who open their mouths against him. It was *Adam's* pride to go to resemble God in omniscience; but here it is lawful to resemble God in forgiving enemies: this is a god-like disposition; and what is godliness, but God-likeness?

2. To forgive is one of the highest evidences of grace. When grace comes into the heart, it makes a man, as *Caleb*, of *another spirit*, *Numb. xiv. 24*. It makes a great metamorphosis, it sweetens the heart, and fills it with love and candour. When a scion is grafted into a stock, it partakes of the nature and sap of the tree, and brings forth the same fruit; take a crab, graft it into a pepin, it brings forth the same fruit



fruit as the pepin : so he who was once of a sowre crabby disposition, given to revenge, when he is once ingrafted into Christ, he partakes of the sap of this heavenly olive, and bears sweet and generous fruit ; he is full of love to his enemies, and *requites good for evil*. As the sun draws up many thick noxious vapours from the earth, and returns them in sweet showers ; so a gracious heart returns the unkindnesses of others, with the sweet influences of love and mercifulness, *Pf. xxxv. 15. They rewarded me evil for good ; but as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting.* This is a good certificate to shew for heaven.

3. The blessed example of our Lord Jesus ; he was of a forgiving spirit : his enemies reviled him, but he did pity them ; their words were more bitter than the gall and vinegar they gave him, but Christ's words were smoother than oil ; they spat upon him, pierced him with the spear and nails, but he prayed for them, *Father, forgive them* ; he wept over his enemies, he shed tears for them that shed his blood : never such a pattern of amazing kindness. Christ bids us *learn of him*, *Matth. xi. 29.* he doth not bid us learn of him to work miracles, but he would have us learn of him to forgive our enemies. If we do not imitate Christ's life, we cannot be saved by his death.

4. The danger of an implacable unforgiving spirit : it *hinders the efficacy* of ordinances ; it is like an obstruction to the body, which keeps it from thriving. A revengeful spirit poisons our sacrifice ; our prayers are turned into sin : will God receive prayer mingled with strange fire ? Our coming to the sacrament is sin, we come not in charity ; so that ordinances are turned into sin. It were sad if all the meat one did eat should turn to poison ; malice poisons the sacramental cup, men eat and drink their own damnation : *Judas* came to the passover in malice, and after the sop Satan entred, *John xiii. 27.*

5. God hath tied his mercy to this condition, if we do not forgive, neither will he forgive us, *Matth. vi. 15. If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.* A man may as well go to hell, for not forgiving, as for not believing. How can they expect mercy from God, whose bowels are shut up, and are merciless to their trespassing brethren ? *James ii. 13. He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.* I

cannot forgive, said one, tho' I go to hell.

6. The examples of the saints, who have been of forgiving spirits. *Joseph* forgave his brethren, though they put him into a pit, and sold him, *Gen. 1. 21. Fear not, I will nourish you, and your little ones.* *Stephen* prayed for his persecutors. *Moses* was of a forgiving spirit ; how many injuries and affronts did he put up ? The people of *Israel* dealt unkindly with him, they murmured against him at the waters of *Marah*, (the water was not so bitter as their spirits) but he fell to prayer for them, *Exod. xv. 25. He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they were made sweet.* When they wanted water, they fell a-chiding with *Moses*, *Exod. xvii. 3. Why hast thou brought us out of Egypt, to kill us with thirst ?* As if they had said, if we die, we will lay our death to thy charge : here was enough to have made *Moses* call for fire from heaven upon them, but he *passeth* by this injury, and, to shew he forgave them, he becomes an *intercessor* for them, *v. 4.* and set the rock a-broach for them, *v. 5.* The prophet *Elisha* feasted his enemies, *2 Kings vi. 23.* he prepared a table for them who would have prepared his grave. *Cramer* was famous for forgiving injuries. When *Luther* had reviled *Calvin*, saith *Calvin*, *Etiamsi millies me diabolus vocet, Tho' he call me a devil a thousand times, yet I will love and honour him as a precious servant of Christ.* When one had abused and wronged a christian, asking him, what wonders hath your master Christ wrought ? saith he, he hath wrought this wonder, that though you have so injured me, yet I can forgive you, and pray for you.

7. Forgiving and requiting good for evil, is the best way to conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. *Saul* having pursued *David* with malice, and hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains, yet *David* would not do him mischief when it was in his power. *David's* kindness melted *Saul's* heart, *1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. Is this thy voice, my son David ? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and said, thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good.* This forgiving is heaping coals, which melts the enemy's heart, *Rom. xii. 20.* This is the most noble victory, to overcome an enemy without striking a blow, to conquer him with love. *Philip* of *Macedon*, when it was told him that one *Nicanor* did openly rail against him, the king, instead of putting him to death,

death, sent him a rich *present*; which did so overcome the man, and make his heart relent, that he went up and down to recant what he had said of the king, and did highly extol the king's clemency.

8. Forgiving others, is the way to have forgiveness from God, and is a sign of forgiveness.

(1.) It is the way to have forgiveness, *Mat. vi.*

14. *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* But one would think other things should sooner procure forgiveness from God, than our forgiving others: no surely, nothing like this to procure forgiveness; for all other acts of religion may have leaven in them. God forbade leaven in the sacrifice, *Exod. xxxiv. 25.* One may give alms, yet there may be the leaven of vain-glory in this; the *Pharisees* sounded a trumpet, they did not give alms, but sell them for applause, *Matth. vi. 2.* One may give his body to be burned, yet there may be leaven in this, it may be a false zeal; there may be leaven in many acts of religion, which sowres the whole lump: but to forgive others that have offended us, this can have no leaven in it, no sinister aim; this is a duty wholly spiritual, and is done purely out of love to God; hence it is, God rather annexeth forgiveness to this, than to the highest and most renowned works of charity, which are so cried up in the world.

(2.) It is a sign of God's forgiving us. It is not a cause of God's forgiving us but a sign: we need not climb up into heaven to see whether our sins are forgiven; let us look into our hearts, and see if we can forgive others. Then we need not doubt but God hath forgiven us: our loving others is nothing but the reflexion of God's love to us: oh therefore, by all these arguments, let us be persuaded to the forgiving others. Christians, how many offences hath God passed by in us? Our sins are *innumerable*, and *hainous*; is God willing to forgive us so many offences, and cannot we forgive a few? No man can do so much wrong to us all our life, as we do to God in one day.

Qu. *But how must we forgive?*

Ans. As God forgives us.

1. *Cordially.* God doth not only make a show of forgiveness, and keeps our sins by him; but doth really forgive, he passeth an act of oblivion, *Jer. xxxi. 34.* So we must not only say, we forgive, but do it with the heart, *Mat. xviii. 35.* *If ye from your hearts forgive not.*

2. God forgives fully; he forgives all our

sins. He doth not for fourscore write down fifty, *Pf. ciii. 3.* *Who forgiveth all thy iniquities.* Hypocrites pass by some offences, but retain others. Would we have God deal so with us, to remit only some trespasses, and call us to account for the rest?

3. God forgives often; we run afresh upon the score, but God multiplies pardon, *Isa. lvii. 7.* Peter asks the question, *Matth. xviii. 21.* *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith to him, I say not, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven. If he say, I repent, you must say, I remit.*

Qu. *But this is one of the highest acts of religion, flesh and blood cannot do it: how shall I attain to it?*

Ans. 1. Let us consider, how many wrongs and injuries we have done against God: what volume can hold our errata? Our sins are more than the sparks in a furnace.

2. If we would forgive, see God's hand in all that men do or say against us. Did we look higher than instruments, our hearts would grow calm, and we would not meditate revenge. *Shimei* reproached *David* and cursed; *David* looked higher, *2 Sam. xvi. 11.* *Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* What made Christ, that when he was reviled he reviled not again? He looked beyond *Judas* and *Pilate*, he saw his father putting the bitter cup into his hand: and as we must see God's hand in all the affronts and incivilities we receive from men, so we must believe God will do us good by all, if we belong to him, *2 Sam. xvi. 12.* *It may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.* *Quisquis detrahit famæ meæ addet mercedi meæ*, Aug. He that injures me shall add to my reward; he that clips my name to make it weigh lighter, shall make my crown weigh heavier. Well might *Stephen* pray for his enemies, *Lord lay not this sin to their charge*, *Acts vii. 60.* He knew they did but increase his glory in heaven; every stone his enemies threw at him, added a pearl to his crown.

3. Lay up a stock of faith, *Luke xvii. 4.* *If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, and say, I repent, thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said to the Lord, increase our faith: as if they had said, we can never do this without a great deal of faith; Lord increase our faith. Believe God had pardoned you,*



you, and you will pardon others; only faith can throw dust upon injuries, and bury them in the grave of forgetfulness.

4. Think how thou hast sometimes wronged others; and may it not be just with God that the same measure you mete to others, should be measured to you again? Hast not thou wronged others, if not in their *goods*, yet in their *name*? If thou hast not borne false witness against them, yet perhaps thou hast spoken falsely of them: the consideration of this may make christians bury injuries in silence.

5. Get humble hearts. A proud man thinks it a disgrace to put up an injury. What causeth so many duels and murders, as pride? *Be clothed with humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. He who is low in

his own eyes, will not be troubled much tho' others lay him low: he knows there is a day coming, when there shall be a resurrection of names as well as bodies, and God will avenge him of his adversaries, *Luke xviii. 7. And shall not God avenge his own elect?* The humble soul leaves his wrongs to God to requite, who hath said, *Vengeance is mine*, Rom. xii. 19.

*Use, of comfort.* Such as forgive, God will forgive them. You have a good argument to plead with God for forgiveness. Lo, I am willing to forgive him who makes me no satisfaction, and wilt not thou forgive me who hast received satisfaction in Christ my surety. So ends the sixth petition.

## OF THE SIXTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. VI. 13. *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

**T**His petition consists of two parts. *First*, deprecatory, *Lead us not into temptation.* *Secondly*, petitory, *But deliver us from evil.*

*First*, *Lead us not into temptation.* Doth God lead into temptation? God tempts no man to sin, *James i. 13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God tempteth not any man.* God doth permit sin, but doth not promote it. He who is an encourager of holiness cannot be a patron of sin. God doth not tempt to that which he hath an antipathy against. What king will tempt his subjects to break those laws which he himself hath established.

*Qu. But is it not said, God tempted Abraham?* *Gen. xxii. 1.*

*Ans.* Tempting there was no more than trying. God tried *Abraham's* faith, as a goldsmith tries gold in the fire: but there is a great deal of difference between God's trying his peoples grace, and exciting their corruption; he trieth their grace, but doth not excite their corruptions: man's sin cannot be justly father'd on God. God tempts no man.

*Qu. What then is the meaning of this, lead us not into temptation;*

*Ans.* When we pray, *lead us not into temptation*; the meaning is, we desire of God, that he would not suffer us to be overcome by temp-

tation. That we may not be given up to the power of a temptation, which is when we are trapan'd into sin.

*Qu. 2. Whence do temptations come?*

*Ans. 1. Ab intra, from ourselves.* The heart is *fomes peccati*, the breeder of all evil. Our own hearts are the greatest tempters: *quisque sibi Satan est*, *James i. 14. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.* The heart is a perfect decoy.

2. Temptations come *ab extra, from Satan.* He is called the *Tempter*, *Matth. iv. 3.* he lies in ambush to do us mischief; *stat in procinctu diabolus*, the devil lays a train of temptation to blow up the fort of our grace: the devil is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail: the world is his *diocese* where he visits; we are sure to find Satan, whatever we are doing, reading, praying, meditating: we find him within, how he came there we know not; we are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it. A saint's whole life (*said Austin*) is a temptation. *Elias*, who could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation. This is a great molestation to a child of God; as it is a trouble to a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted. The more one is tempted to evil, the more he is hindered from good: we are in great danger

danger of Satan the *prince of the air*; and we had need often pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* That we may see in what danger we are of Satan's temptations,

Consider, (1.) His *malice* in tempting. This hellish serpent is swelled with the poison of malice. Satan envies man's happiness: to see a clod of dust so near to God, and himself (once a glorious angel) cast out of the heavenly paradise, this makes him pursue mankind with inveterate hatred, *Rev. xii. 12. The devil is come down to you, bearing great wrath.* If there be any thing this infernal spirit of hell can delight in, it is to ruin souls, and bring them into the same condemnation with himself. This malice of Satan in tempting must needs be great, if we consider three things;

1. That when Satan is so full of *torment*, yet, that at such a time he should tempt. One would think that Satan should scarce have a thought free from thinking of his own misery; yet such is his rage and malice, that, when God is punishing him, he is tempting.

2. Satan's malice is great, that he will tempt where he knows he cannot prevail: he will put forth his sting, tho' he cannot hurt. He tempted Christ, *Matth. iv. 3. If thou be the Son of God.* He knew well enough Christ was God as well as man, yet he would tempt him. Such was his malice against Christ, that he would put an affront upon Christ, tho' he knew he could not conquer him. He tempts the elect to blasphemy: he knows he cannot prevail against the elect; yet such is his malice, that though he cannot storm the garrison of their hearts, yet he will plant his pieces of ordnance against them.

3. Satan's malice is great, that tho' he knows his tempting men to sin will increase his own torment in hell, yet he will not leave off tempting: every temptation makes his chain heavier, and his fire hotter, yet he will tempt. Therefore Satan being such a malicious revengeful spirit, had not we need pray that God would not suffer him to prevail by his temptations? *Lead us not into temptation.*

(2.) Consider Satan's diligence in tempting, *1 Pet. v. 8. He walketh about.* He neglects no time; he who would have us idle, yet he himself is always busied. This lion is ever hunting after his prey, he compasseth sea and land to make a proselyte; he walks about, he walks not as a pilgrim, but a spy; he watcheth where he may throw in the fire-ball of a temptation. He is a

*restless spirit*; if we repulse him, yet he will not desist, but come again with a temptation. Like *Marcellus*, a Roman captain *Hannibal* speaks of, whether he was conquered, or did conquer, he was never quiet. More particularly, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this,

1. If he gets the least advantage by temptation, he pursues it to the utmost. If his motion to sin begins to take, he follows it close, and presseth to the *act* of sin. When he tempted *Judas* to betray Christ, and found that *Judas* was inclinable, and began to bite at the bait of thirty pieces of silver, he hurries him on, and never leaves him till he had betrayed his Lord and Master. When he had tempted *Spira* to renounce his religion, and saw *Spira* began to yield, he follows his temptation close, and never left till he had made him go to the legate at *Venice*, and there abjure his faith in Christ.

2. Again, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this, the variety of temptations he useth. He doth not confine himself to one sort of temptation, he hath more plots than one: if he finds one temptation doth not prevail, he will have another: if he cannot tempt to lust, he will tempt to pride: if a temptation to covetousness doth not prevail, he will tempt to profuseness: if he cannot fright men into despair, he will see if he can draw them to presumption: if he cannot make them prophane, he will see if he can make them formalists: if he cannot make them vitious, he will tempt them to be erroneous. He will tempt them to leave off ordinances; he will pretend revelations. Error damns as well as vice; the one pistols, the other poisons: thus Satan's diligence in tempting is great, he will turn every stone, he hath several tools to work with; if one temptation will not do, he will make use of another. Had not we need then to pray, *Lead us not into temptation?*

3. Consider Satan's power in tempting. He is called *the prince of the world*, *John xii. 31.* and the *strong man*, *Luke xi. 21.* and the *great red dragon*, who, *with his tail cast down the third part of the stars*, *Rev. xii. 5.* He is full of power, being an angel; tho' Satan hath lost his holiness, yet not his strength. The devil's power in tempting is seen several ways: 1. He as a *spirit*, having an intellectual being, can convey himself into the fancy, and poison it with bad thoughts. As the holy Ghost doth cast in good motions, so the devil doth bad; he put it into *Judas's* heart to betray Christ, *John*



xiii. 2. 2. Satan, tho' he cannot compel the will, yet he can present pleasing objects to the senses, which have a great force in them. He set a *wedge of gold* before *Achan*, and so enticed him with that golden bait. 2. The devil can excite and stir up the *corruption within*, and work some *inclinableness* in the heart with-in to embrace the temptation: thus he stirred up corruption in *David's* heart, and provoked him to number the people, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1. Satan can blow the spark of lust into a flame.

4. Herein lies much of his power, that he being a *spirit*, can so strangely convey his temptations into our minds, that we cannot easily discern whether they come from Satan, or from *ourselves*; whether they are his suggestions, or the natural births of our own hearts. A bird may hatch the egg of another bird, thinking it is her own: often we hatch the devil's motions, thinking they come from our own hearts. When *Peter* dissuaded Christ from suffering, sure *Peter* thought it came from the good affection, which he did bear to his master, *Matth.* xvi. 22. little did *Peter* think Satan had an hand in it. Now, if the devil hath such a power to instil his temptations, that we hardly know whether they be *his* or *ours*, we are in a great deal of danger, and had need pray, not to be led into temptation. Here, I know, some are desirous to move the question,

Qu. *How shall we perceive when a motion comes from our own hearts, and when from Satan?*

Ans. It is hard (as *Bernard* saith) to distinguish *inter morsum serpentis, & morbum mentis*, between those suggestions which come from Satan, and which breed out of our own hearts. But I conceive there is this threefold difference.

1. Such motions to evil as come from our own hearts, spring up more *leisurely*, and by degrees; a sin is long concocted in the thoughts, ere consent be given; but usually we may know a motion comes from Satan by its suddenness; therefore temptation is compared to a dart, *Eph.* vi. 16. because it is shot suddenly. *David's* numbering the people was a motion which the devil did inject suddenly.

2. The motions to evil which come from our own hearts are not so *terrible*; few are frightened at the sight of their own children: but motions coming from Satan are more ghastly and frightful, as motions to blasphemy and self-murder. Hence it is temptations are compared to

ry darts, *Eph.* vi. for their terribleness, because they do, as flashes of fire, startle and affright the soul.

3. When evil thoughts are thrown into our mind, which we loath, and have reluctancy against; when we strive against them, and flee from them, as *Moses* did from the serpent, this shews they are not the natural birth of our own heart, but the hand of *Joab* is in this. Satan hath injected these impure motions.

4. Satan's power in tempting appears by the long experience he hath gotten in the art; he hath been a tempter, well nigh as long as he hath been an angel. Who are fitter for action than men of experience? who is fitter to steer a ship, than an old experienced pilot? Satan hath gained much experience, by his being so long versed in the trade of tempting. He having such experience, knows what are the temptations which have foiled others, and are most likely to prevail: the fowler lays those snares which have caught other birds. Satan having such power in tempting, we are in danger, and had need pray, *Lead us not into temptation.*

5. Consider Satan's *subtily* in tempting. The Greek word to *tempt*, signifies to *deceive*. Satan, in tempting, useth many subtil policies to deceive; we read of the *depths* of Satan, *Rev.* ii. 24. and his devices and stratagems, 2 *Cor.* ii. 11. we read of his snares and his darts; his snares are worse than his darts: he is called a lion for his cruelty, and an old serpent for his subtilty; he hath several sorts of subtilty in tempting.

1st. *Subtily*. The devil observes the natural temper and constitution, *Omnium discutit mores*-----The devil doth not know the hearts of men, but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so accordingly can apply himself. As the husbandman knows what seed is proper to sow in such a soil; so Satan finding out the temper, knows what temptation is proper to sow in such an heart. That way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows; Satan tempts the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold. He provides savoury meat, such as the sinner loves.

2d. *Subtily*. Satan chooseth the fittest season to tempt in. As a cunning angler casts in his angle when the fish will bite best; the devil can hit the very joint of time when a tempta-  
tion

tion is likeliest to prevail. There are several seasons he tempts in.

1<sup>st</sup>. In our first initiation and entrance into religion, when we have newly given up our names to Christ. Satan will never disturb his vassals; but when we have broke his prison in conversion, now he pursues us with violent temptations. *Solet inter primordia conversionis acrius insurgere*, Bern. When *Israel* were got a little out of *Egypt*, then *Pharaoh* pursues them. *Herod*, as soon as Christ was born, sent to destroy him; so, when the child of grace is newly born, the devil labours to strangle it with temptation. When the first buddings and blossoms of grace begin to appear, the devil would nip these tender buds with the sharp blasts of his temptations. Indeed, at first conversion, grace is so weak, and temptation so strong, that one would wonder how the young convert escapes with his life: Satan hath a spite at the *New Creature*.

2<sup>d</sup>. *Season*. The devil tempts when he finds us *idle*, and *unemployed*. We do not sow seed in fallow ground; but *Satan* sows most of his seed in a person that lies fallow. When the fowler sees a bird sit still and perch upon the tree, now he shoots it; so when *Satan* observes us to sit still, now he shoots his fiery darts of temptation at us, *Matth. xiii. 25. While men slept, the enemy sowed tares*; so, while men sleep in sloth, *Satan* sows his tares. When *David* was walking on the leads, and unemployed, now the devil set a tempting object before him, and it prevailed, *2 Sam. xi. 3*.

3<sup>d</sup>. *Season*. When a person is reduced to outward wants and straits, now is the devil's tempting time. When Christ had fasted forty days and was hungry, then the devil comes and tempts him with the *glory of the world*, *Matth. iv. 8*. When provisions grow short, now *Satan* sets in with a temptation; *What*, wilt thou starve rather than steal? reach forth thy hand, pluck the forbidden fruit. How oft doth this temptation prevail? how many do we see, who, instead of living by faith, live by their shifts, and will steal the venison, tho' they lose the blessing.

*Season 4th*. *Satan* tempts after an ordinance. When we have been at hearing of the word, or prayer, or sacrament; now *Satan* casts in the angle of temptation. *When Christ had been fasting and praying, then came the tempter*, *Matth. iv. 3*.

Qu. *Why doth Satan choose this time to tempt*

*in, after an ordinance? one would think this were the most disadvantageous time, for now the soul is raised up to an heavenly frame?*

Ans. 1. Malice puts *Satan* upon it. The ordinances, that cause fervour in a saint, cause fury in *Satan*. He knows in every duty we have a design against him; in every prayer we put up a suit in heaven against him; in the Lord's supper, we take the sacrament upon it, to fight under Christ's banner against the devil; therefore now *Satan* is more enraged, he now lays his snares, and shoots his darts, against us.

2. *Satan* tempts after an ordinance, because he thinks he shall now find us more secure. After we have been at the solemn worship of God, we are apt to grow remiss, and leave off former strictness; like a soldier, that after the battle leaves off his armour: now *Satan* watcheth his time; he doth as *David* did to the *Amalekites*, after they had taken the spoil, and were secure, they did eat and drink, and dance; now *David* fell upon them, and did smite them, *1 Sam. xxx. 17*. So when we grow remiss after an ordinance, and perhaps too much indulge ourselves in carnal delights, now *Satan* falls upon us by a temptation, and oft foils us. As after a full meal, men are apt to grow drowsy; so after we have had a full meal at an ordinance, we are apt to slumber and grow secure, and now *Satan* shoots his arrow of temptation, and hits us between the joints of our armour.

*Season 5*. *Satan* tempts after some discoveries of God's love. *Satan*, like a pirate, sets on a ship that is richly laden; so, when a soul hath been laden with spiritual comforts, now the devil will be shooting at him to rob him of all. The devil envies to see a soul feasted with spiritual joy, *Joseph's* party-coloured coat made his brethren envy him, and plot against him. After *David* had the good news of the pardon of his sin, (which must needs fill him with consolation) *Satan* presently tempted him to a new sin in numbring the people; and so all his comfort leaked out, and was spilt.

*Season 6*. *Satan* tempts when he sees us weakest. He breaks over the hedge where it is lowest; as the sons of *Jacob* came upon the *Shechemites* when they were sore, and could make no resistance, *Gen. xxxiv. 25*. At two times *Satan* comes upon us in our weakness.

(1.) When we are alone; so he came to *Eve* when her husband was away, and the less able to resist his temptation. *Satan* hath this policy,



he gives his poison privately, when no body is by; others might discover his treachery. Satan is like a cunning suiter, that woos the daughter when the parents are from home; so, when one is alone, and none near, now the devil comes a wooing with a temptation, and hopes to have the match struck up.

(2.) When the hour of *death* approaches. As the poor sheep when it is sick and weak and can hardly help itself, now the crows ly picking at it; so, when a saint is weak on his death-bed, now the devil lies picking at him with a temptation; he reserves his most furious assaults till the last. The people of *Israel* were never so fiercely assaulted, as when they were going to take possession of the promised land; then all the kings of *Canaan* combined their forces against them; so, when the saints are leaving the world, and going to set their foot on the heavenly *Canaan*, now Satan sets upon them by temptation; he tells them, they are hypocrites; all their evidences are counterfeit. Thus, like a coward, he strikes the saints when they are down; when death is striking at the body, he is striking at the soul. This is his second subtilty, Satan chooseth the fittest season when to throw in a temptation.

*Subtilty 3.* A third subtil policy of Satan in tempting, is, he baits his hook with *religion*; the devil can hang out Christ's colours, and tempt to sin under pretences of piety. Now he is the *white devil*, and transforms himself into an angel of light. *Celsus* wrote a book full of error, and he intituled it, *liber veritatis*, the book of truth. So Satan can write the title of religion upon his worst temptations. He comes to Christ with scripture in his mouth, *it is written*, &c. So he comes to many, and tempts them to sin, under the pretence of religion; he tempts to evil, that *good may come of it*; he tempts men to such unwarrantable actions, that they may be put into a capacity of honouring God the more. He tempts them to accept of preferment against conscience, that hereby they may be in a condition of doing more good: he put *Herod* upon killing *John Baptist*, that hereby he might be kept from the violation of his oath. He tempts many to oppression and extortion, telling them, they are bound to provide for their family. He tempts many to make away with themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God: thus he wraps his poisonous pills in sugar. Who would suspect him when he comes as a divine,

and quotes scripture.

4. *Subtilty* of Satan is, to tempt to sin *gradually*. The *old serpent* winds himself in by degrees, he tempts first to *lesser sin*, that so he may bring on *greater*. A small offence may occasion a great crime; as a little prick of an artery may occasion a mortal gangrene. Satan first tempted *David* to an impure glance of the eye, to look on *Bathsheba*; and that unclean look occasioned adultery and murder. First the devil tempts to go into the company of the wicked, then to twist into a cord of friendship, and so, by degrees, to be brought into the same condemnation with them: this is a great subtilty of Satan, to tempt to lesser sins first; for these harden the heart, and fit men for committing of more horrid and tremendous sins.

5. *Subtilty*. Satan's policy is to hand over temptations to us, by those whom we least suspect.

1. By near friends; he tempts us by them who are near in blood. He tempted *Job* by a proxy, he handed over a temptation to him, by his wife, *Job* ii. 9. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity?* As if he had said, *Job*, thou seest how, for all thy religion, God deals with thee; his hand is gone out fore against thee: what, and still pray, and weep? Cast off all religion, turn atheist; *curse God, and die*. Thus Satan made use of *Job's* wife to do his work: the woman was made of the rib, and Satan made a bow of this rib, out of which he shot the arrow of his temptation. *Per costam petit cor*. The devil oft stands behind the curtain, he will not be seen in the business, but puts others to do his work. As a man makes use of a sergeant to arrest another; so Satan makes use of a proxy to tempt: as he did creep into the serpent, so he can creep into a near relation.

2. He tempts sometimes by religious friends; the devil keeps still out of sight, that his cloven foot may not be seen. Who would have thought to have found the devil in *Peter*? When he dissuaded Christ from suffering, master, *spare thyself*; Christ spied Satan in the temptation, *get thee behind me, Satan*. When our religious friends would dissuade us from doing our duty, Satan is a lying spirit in their mouths, and would by them entice us to evil.

6. *Subtilty*. Satan tempts some persons more than others: some are like wet tinder, who will not so soon take the fire of temptation as others.

Satan

Satan tempts most where he thinks his policies will more easily prevail; some are fitter to receive the impression of temptations, as soft wax is fitter to take the stamp of the seal. The apostle speaks of *vessels fitted for destruction*, Rom. ix. 22. so there are vessels fitted for temptation. Some, like the sponge, suck in Satan's temptations. There are five sorts of persons that Satan doth most sit brooding upon by his temptations.

1st. *Ignorant persons*. The devil can lead them into any snare; you may lead a blind man any whither. God made a law, that the *Jerus* should not put a stumbling-block in the way of the blind, *Lev. xix. 14*. Satan knows it is easy to put a temptation in the way of the blind, at which they shall stumble into hell. When the *Syrians* were smitten with blindness, the prophet *Elisha* could lead them whither he would into the enemy's country, *2 Kings vi. 20*. The bird that is blind is soon shot by the fowler. Satan, the god of this world, blinds men, and then shoots them. An ignorant man cannot see the devil's snares; Satan tells him such a thing is no sin, or but a little one, and he will do well enough; 'tis but repent.

2dly. Satan tempts *unbelievers*. He who, with *Diagoras*, doubts of a Deity, or, with the *Phocinians*, denies hell; what sin will not this man be drawn to? He is like metal that Satan can cast into any mould; he can dye him of any colour. An unbeliever will stick at no sin; luxury, perjury, injustice. *Paul* was afraid at none so much as them that did not believe, *Rom. xv. 31*. *That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea*.

3dly. Satan tempts *proud persons*; these he hath more power of: None is in greater danger of falling by a temptation, than he who stands high in his own conceit. When *David's* heart was lifted up in pride, then the devil stirred him up to number the people, *2 Sam. xxiv. 2*. *Celsæ graviores casu decidunt turres, feriuntque summos fulmina montes*, *Hor.* Satan made use of *Hamans* pride to be his shame.

4thly. *Melancholy persons*. Melancholy is *atra bilis*, a black humour, seated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy clothes the mind in *fable*, it doth disturb reason; Satan doth work much upon this humour. There are three things in melancholy, which give the devil great advantage; (1.) It unfits for duty, it pulls off the chariot-wheels, it dispirits a man. Lute-strings, when they are wet, will not sound; when the

spirit is sad and melancholy, a christian is out of tune for spiritual actions. (2.) Melancholy sides often with Satan against God; the devil tells such a person, God doth not love him, there is no mercy for him; and the melancholy soul is apt to think so too, and sets his hand to the devil's lies. (3.) Melancholy breeds discontent, and discontent is a cause of many sins, unthankfulness, impatience, and oft it ends in self-murder. Judge then what an advantage Satan hath against a melancholy person, and how easily he may prevail with his temptation. A melancholy person tempts the devil to tempt him.

6thly. *Idle persons*. He who is idle, the devil will find him work to do. *Jerome* gave his friend this counsel, To be ever well employed, that when the tempter came, he might find him working in the vineyard. If the hands be not working, the head will be plotting sin, *Micah ii. 1*.

7. *Subtily* of Satan, is, to give some little respite, and seem to leave off tempting a while, that he may come on after with more advantage. As *Israel* made as if they were beaten before the men of  *Ai*, and fled; but it was a policy to draw them out of their fenced cities, and ensnare them by an ambush, *Josb. viii. 15*. The devil sometimes raiseth the siege, and feigns a flight, that he may the better obtain the victory. He goes away for a time, that he may return when he sees a better season, *Luke xi. 24*. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks in dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return to my house, whence I came out.* Satan, by feigning a flight, and leaving off tempting a while, causeth security in persons, and they think they are safe, and are become victors; when, on a sudden, Satan falls on, and wounds them. As one that is going to leap, runs back a little, that he may take the greater jump; Satan seems to retire and run back a little, that he may come on again with a temptation more furiously and successfully: therefore we need always to watch and have on our spiritual armour.

8. *Subtily* of the old serpent is, either to take men off from the use of means, or to make them miscarry in the use of means.

*First*, He labours to take men off from duty, from praying and hearing; his design is to discourage them: and, so do that, he hath two artifices;

1. He discourageth them from duty, by suggesting to them their *unworthiness*; they are



not worthy to approach to God, or have any signals of his love and favour. They are sinful, and God is holy, how dare they presume to bring their impure offering to God? This is a temptation indeed. That we should see ourselves unworthy, is good, and argues humility; but to think we should not approach to God because of unworthiness, is a conclusion of the devil's making. God saith, *Come*, though unworthy: by this temptation, the devil takes many off from coming to the Lord's table. O (saith he) this is a solemn ordinance, and requires much holiness; how darest thou so unworthily come, lest thou eatest and drinkest unworthily? Thus, as *Saul* kept the people from eating honey, so the devil by this temptation fears many from this ordinance which is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.

2. Satan endeavours to discourage from duty, by *objecting want of success*. When men have waited upon God in the use of ordinances, and yet find not that comfort they desire; now Satan disheartens them, and puts them upon resolves of declining all religion; they begin to say as that wicked king, *2 Kings* vi. 33. *Why should I wait on the Lord any longer?* When *Saul* saw God answered him not by dreams and visions, Satan tempted him to leave God's worship, and seek to the witch of *Endor*, i. 28. No answer of prayer comes; therefore, saith Satan, leave off praying; who will sow seed where no crop comes up? Thus the devil would, by his subtil logic, dispute a poor soul out of duty. But if he sees he cannot prevail this way, to take men off from the use of means, then he labours,

*Secondly*, To make them miscarry in the use of means. By this artifice he prevails over multitudes of professors. The devil stands as he did at *Joshua's* right-hand, to resist men, *Josh.* iii. 1. If he can't hinder them from duty, he will be sure to hinder them in duty, two ways,

1<sup>st</sup>. By causing distraction in the service of God; and this he doth by proposing objects of vanity, or by whispering in men's ears, that they can scarce mind what they are doing.

2<sup>dy</sup>. Satan hinders, by putting men upon doing duties in a wrong manner. 1. In a *dead formal* manner, that so they may fail of the success. Satan knows duties done superficially were as good to be left undone. That prayer which doth not pierce the heart, will never pierce heaven. 2. He puts them upon doing duties for wrong ends. *Finis specificat actio-*

*nem*; he will make them look a-squint, and have by-ends in duty, *Matth.* vi. 5. *Be not as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.* Prayer is good, but to pray to be seen of men, this was a dead fly in the box of ointment; the oil of vain-glory feeds their lamp; sinister aims corrupt and fly-blow our holy things. Here is Satan's policy, either to prevent duty, or pervert it; either to take men off from the use of means, or make them miscarry in the use of means.

9. *Subtily*. Satan can colour over sin with the name and pretence of virtue. *Alcibiades* hung a curtain curiously embroidered over a foul picture full of satyrs; so Satan can put the image of virtue over the foul picture of sin. Satan can cheat men with false wares; he can make them believe, that presumption is faith, that intemperate passion is zeal, revenge is prudence, covetousness is frugality, and prodigality good hospitality. *Come, see my zeal for the Lord*, saith *Jehu*. Satan persuaded him it was a fire from heaven, when it was nothing but the wild-fire of his own ambition; it was not zeal, but state-policy. This is a subtil art of Satan, to deceive by tempting, and put men off with the dead child, instead of the live-child; to make men believe that grace, which is a sin; as if one should write *balm-water* upon a glass of poison. If Satan hath all these subtil artifices in tempting, are we not in great danger from this prince of the air? and had we not need often pray, *Lord, suffer us not to be led into temptation?* As the serpent beguiled *Eve* with his subtilty, *2 Cor.* xi. 2. let us not be beguiled by the snares and policies of this hellish *Machiavel*.

Satan hath a dexterity in subtil contrivances; he doth more hurt as a fox, than a lion; his snares are worse than his darts, *2 Cor.* ii. 11. *We are not ignorant of his devices.*

10. The next subtilty of Satan is, he labours to ensnare us by *lawful things*, in *licitis perimus omnes*; more are hurt by lawful things, than unlawful, as more are killed with wine than poison: gross sins affright, but how many take a surfeit and die, in using lawful things inordinately? Recreation is lawful; eating and drinking is lawful, but many offend by excess, and their table is a snare. Relations are lawful, but how oft doth Satan tempt to over-love? how oft is the wife and child laid in God's room? excess makes things lawful become sinful.

11. *Subtily* of Satan is, to make the duties of our general and particular calling hinder and jumble out one another. Our general calling is serving of God, our particular calling is minding our employments in the world. It is wisdom to be regular in both these, when the particular calling doth not eat out the time for God's service, nor the service of God hinder diligence in a calling. The devil's art is to make christians defective in one of these two: some spend all their time in hearing, reading, and under a pretence of living by faith, do not live in a calling: others Satan takes off duties of religion, under a pretence that they must provide for their families; he makes them so careful for their bodies, that they quite neglect their souls. This is the subtilty of the old-serpent, to make men negligent in the duties either of the first table or the second.

12. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to *misrepresent true holiness*, that he may make others out of love with it. He paints the face of religion full of fears, and with seeming blemishes, that he may create in the minds of men prejudice against it. Satan misrepresents religion as the most *melancholy* thing, and that he who embraceth it, must banish all joy out of his diocese; though the apostle saith, *Joy in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. Satan suggests that religion exposeth men to danger; he shews them the cross, but hides the crown from them: he labours to put all the *disgrace* he can upon holiness, that he may tempt men to the renouncing of it. Satan abuseth the good christian, and gives him a wrong name; the truly zealous man, Satan calls hot-headed and factious; the patient man, that bears injuries without revenge, Satan represents him as a coward; the humble man is low-spirited; the heavenly man Satan calls fool, he lets go things that are seen, for things that are not seen: thus the devil misrepresents religion to the world. As *John Huss*, that holy man, was painted with red devils; so Satan paints holiness with as deformed, mishappen a face, as he can, that he may, by this temptation, draw men off from solid piety, and make them rather scorn than embrace it. The hand of *Joub* is in this: Satan is tempting persons to atheism, to cast off all religion.

13. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting, is to draw men off from the love of the truth to embrace error. 2 *Theff.* ii. 11. *That they should believe a lie.* Satan is called, in scripture, not only an *unclean spirit*, but a *lying spirit*. As an un-

*clean spirit*, so he labours to defile the soul with lust; and as a *lying spirit*, so he labours to corrupt the mind with error: and indeed this is dangerous, because many errors do look so like the truth, as alchemy represents true gold. Satan thus beguiles souls. Though the scripture blames heretics for being the promoters of error; yet it chargeth Satan with being the chief contriver of it. They spread the error, but the devil is a lying spirit in their mouths. This is Satan's great temptation: he makes men believe such are glorious truths, which are dangerous *impostures*; thus he transforms himself *into an angel of light*. What is the meaning of Satan's *sowing tares* in the parable, *Mat. xiii.* 25. but Satan's sowing error instead of truth?

How quickly had the devil broached false doctrine in the apostles times, That it was necessary to be circumcised, *Acts xv.* 1. that angel-worship was lawful, and that Christ was not yet come in the flesh? 1 *John iv.* 3. Now the devil tempts by drawing men to error, because he knows how deadly this snare is, and the great mischief error will do when it comes. 1. Error is of a spreading nature; it is compared to *leaven*, because it sowres, *Matth. xvi.* 11. and to a *Gangrene*, because it spreads, 2 *Tim.* 17. (1.) One error spreads *into more* like a circle in the water, that multiplies into more circles: one error seldom goes alone. (2) error spreads from *one person to another*; it is like the plague, which infects all round about. Satan, by infecting one person with error, infects more: the error of *Pelagius* did spread on a sudden into *Palestine, Africa, Italy*: the *Arrian* error was at first but a single spark, but at last it set almost all the world on fire. 2. The devil lays this snare of error, because error brings divisions into the church; and divisions bring an opprobrium and scandal upon the ways of God. The devil danceth at discord: division destroys peace which was Christ's legacy; and love, which is the bond of perfection. Not only Christ's coat hath been rent, but his body, by the divisions which error hath caused. In churches or families where error creeps in, what animosities and factions doth it make? it sets the father against the son, and the son against the father. What slaughters and bloodshed have been occasioned by errors broached in the church? 3. The devil's policy in raising errors, is to hinder *reformation*; the devil was never a friend to reformation. In the primitive times, after the apostles days, the serpent cast out of his mouth



water as a flood after the woman, *Rev. xii. 15.* Which was a deluge of heresies that so he might hinder the progress of the gospel. 4. Satan tempts to error, because error devours godliness. The *Gnosticks*, as *Epiphanius* observes, were not only corrupted in their judgments, but in their morals; they were loose in their lives, *Jude 4. Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.* The *Famalists* afterwards turned ranters, and gave themselves over to vices and immoralities; and this they did, boasting of the spirit and perfection. 5. The devil's design in seducing by error, is, he knows error is pernicious to souls. Error damns, as well as vice; poison kills as well as pistol. 2 *Pet. ii. 1. They shall privily bring in damnable heresies.* Now, if Satan be thus subtle in laying snares of error to deceive, had not we need pray that God would not suffer us to be led into temptation; that he would make us wise to keep out of the snare of error, or, if we have fallen into it, that he would give us to recover out of the snare by repentance?

14. Another subtilty of Satan is, to bewitch and ensnare men, by setting *pleasing baits* before them; the riches, pleasures, honours of the world, *Mat. iv. 9. All this will I give thee.* How many doth Satan tempt with this *golden apple*? Pride; idleness, luxury, are the three worms which breed of plenty, 1 *Tim. vi. 9. They that will be rich fall into temptation and snare.* Satan kills with these silver darts: how many surfeit on luscious delights? The pleasures of the world are the great engine by which Satan batters down mens souls. His policy is to tickle them to death, to damn them with delights. The flesh would fain be pleased, and Satan prevails by this temptation; he drowns them in the sweet waters of pleasure, such as have abundance of the world, walk in the midst of golden snares. We had need watch our hearts in prosperity, and pray not to be led into temptation. We have as much need to be careful that we are not endangered by prosperity, as a man hath to be careful at a feast, where there are some poisoned dishes of meat.

15. Subtilty of Satan in tempting is, to plead necessity. Satan's policy in tempting men under a plea of necessity is this, he knows that necessity may in some cases seem to palliate and excuse a sin. It may seem to make a lesser evil good, to avoid a greater, as *Lot* offered to expose his daughters to the *Sodomites*, and was willing that they should defile them, that he might

preserve the angel strangers that were come into his house, *Gen. xix. 8.* Doubtless Satan had an hand in this temptation, and made *Lot* believe that the necessity of this action would excuse the sin. The tradesman pleads a necessity of unlawful gain, else he cannot live; another pleads a necessity of revenge, else his credit would be impaired: thus Satan tempts men to sin, by telling them of the necessity. Nay, the devil will quote scripture for it, that, in some cases extraordinary, there may be a necessity of doing that which is not justifiable: did not *David*, in case of necessity, *eat the shew bread, which was not lawful for him, but only the priests?* *Mat. xii. 4.* Nor do we read he was blamed; then will Satan say, why may not you in cases extraordinary trespass a little, and take the forbidden fruit? O beware of this temptation, see Satan's cloven foot in it: nothing can warrant a thing in its own nature sinful; necessity will not justify impiety.

16. Subtilty of Satan in tempting is, to draw men to *presumption.* *Presumption is a confidence without ground:* it is made up of two ingredients, *audacity* and *security*; this temptation is common. There is a two-fold presumption: (1.) Satan tempts men to presume of their own hearts, that they are better than they are; they presume they have grace, when they have none, they will not take gold on trust, but they will take grace upon trust; the foolish virgins presumed that they had oyl in their vessels when they had none. Here that rule of *Epicharmus* is good, *distrust a fallacious heart.* (2.) Satan tempts men to presume of God's mercy; though they are not so good as they should be, yet God is merciful. They look upon God's mercy with the broad spectacles of presumption. Satan soothes men up in their sins; he preacheth to them *all hope, no fear*; and so he deludes them with these golden dreams. *Quam multi cum vana spe descendunt ad inferos,* Aug. Presumption is Satan's draw-net, by which he drags millions to hell: Satan, by this temptation, oft draws the Godly to sin; they presume upon their privileges, or graces, and so venture on occasions of sin. *Jehesha- phat* twisted into a league of amity with king *Ahab*, presuming his grace would be antidote strong enough against the infection, 2 *Chron. xviii. 3.* Satan tempted *Peter* to presume upon his own strength: and when it came to a trial, he was foiled, and came off with shame. We had therefore need pray, *that we may not be led*

led into this temptation; and with David, keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, Pl. xix. 13.

17. Subtily of Satan in tempting is, to carry on his designs against us under the highest pretences of friendship: he thus puts silver upon his bait, and dips his poisoned pills in sugar. Satan doth, as some courtiers, make the greatest pretences of love, where they have the most deadly hatred. *Job's* sword was usher'd in with a kiss; he kissed Abner, and then smote him under the fifth rib. Satan puts off his lions skin, and comes in sheeps clothing; he pretends kindness and friendship: he would consult what might be for our good. Thus Satan came to Christ, command that these stones be made bread, Matth. iv. As if he had said to Christ, I see thou art hungry, and here there is no table spread for thee in the wilderness; I therefore pitying thy condition, wish thee to get something to eat; turn stones to bread, that thy hunger may be satisfied: but Christ spied the temptation and with the sword of the spirit wounded the old serpent. Thus Satan came to Eve, and tempted her under the notion of a friend; eat, saith he, of the forbidden fruit; for the Lord knows, that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be as Gods: as if he had said, I persuade you only to that which will put you in a better condition than now you are; eat of this tree, and it will make you omniscient, ye shall be as gods. What a kind devil was here? But it was a subtil temptation, she greedily swallowing the bait, it undid her and all her posterity. Let us fear his fallacious flatteries. *Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes.*

18. Subtily is, when Satan hath tempted men to sin, he persuades them to keep his counsel: like them, that have some foul disease, they will rather die than tell the physician. It were wisdom, in case of fore temptation, to open one's mind to some experienced Christian, whose counsel might be an antidote against the temptation: but the danger of a temptation lies in the concealing of it; it is like the concealing of treason, which may prove mortal. How had we need renew this petition. Lead us not into temptation?

19. Subtily of Satan in tempting is, to make use of fit tools and engines, for the carrying on of his work; that is, he makes use of such persons as may be likely means to promote his tempting designs. The devil lays the plot of

a temptation, and as it were cuts out the work, and then he employs others to finish it.

(1.) Satan makes use of such as are in places of dignity. Men of renown. He knows, if he can get these on his side, they may draw others into snares: when the princes and heads of the tribes joyned with *Korah*, they presently drew a multitude into the conspiracy, Numb. xvi. 2. 10.

(2.) The devil makes use of such to carry on his tempting designs, as are men of wit and parts; such as if it were possible, should deceive the very elect. He must have a great deal of cunning that shall persuade a man to be out of love with his food: the devil can make use of such heretical spirits as shall persuade men to be out of love with the ordinances of God, which they profess they have found comfort in. Many who once seemed to be strict frequenters of the house of God, are now persuaded, by Satan's cunning instruments, to leave off all, and follow an *ignis fatuus*, the light within them. This is a great subtilty of the devil, to make use of such cunning, subtil pated men, as may be fit to carry on his tempting designs.

(3.) Satan makes use of bad company to be instruments of tempting; they draw youth to sin. First, they persuade them to come into their company, then to twist a cord of friendship, then to drink with them; and, by degrees, debauch them. These are the devil's decoys to tempt others.

20. Subtily of Satan is, he, in his temptation, strikes at some grace more than other: as in tempting, he aims at some persons more than others; so he aims at some grace more than other; and if he can prevail in this, he knows what an advantage it will be to him. If you ask what grace it is that Satan in his temptations doth most strike at? I answer, it is the grace of faith: he lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of our faith, *Fidei scutum percutit*. Why did Christ pray more for Peter's faith, than any other grace? Luke xxii. 32. Because Christ saw that his faith was most in danger, the devil was striking at this grace. Satan, in tempting Eve, did labour to weaken her faith, Gen. iii. 1. Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? The devil would persuade her, that God had not spoken truth; and when he had once wrought her to distrust, then she took of the tree. 'Tis called *scutum fidei*, the shield of faith, Eph. vi.



16. Satan, in tempting, strikes most at our shield, he assaults our faith. True faith, tho' it cannot be wholly lost, yet it may suffer a great eclipse; tho' the devil cannot by temptation take away the life of faith, yet he may the lively acting; he cannot *gratiam diruere*, but he may *debilitare*.

Qu. But why doth Satan in tempting chiefly set upon our faith? Ans. 1. Kings xxii. 31. *Fight neither with small or great, save only with the King.* So faith is as it were the king of the graces; it is a royal princely grace, and puts forth the most majestick and noble acts, therefore Satan fights chiefly with this kingly grace. I shall shew you the devil's policy in assaulting faith most.

1st. Because this is the grace doth Satan most *mischief*; it makes the most resistance against him, 1 Pet. v. 9. *Whom resist, stedfast in faith.* No grace doth more bruise the *serpent's head* than faith. Faith is both a shield and a sword, *defensive* and *offensive*. (1.) It is a *shield*: a shield guards the head, defends the vitals; the shield of faith causeth that the fiery darts of temptation do not pierce us thorow. (2.) Faith is a *sword*, it wounds the red-dragon.

Qu. How comes faith to be strong, that it can resist Satan, and put him to flight?

Ans. 1. Because faith brings the strength of Christ into the soul; *Samson's* strength lay in his hair, ours lies in Christ. If a child be assaulted, it runs and calls to its father for help; so, when faith is assaulted, it runs and calls Christ, and in his strength overcomes.

2. Faith furnisheth itself with store of promises; the promises are faith's weapons to fight with. Now, as *David*, by five stones in his sling, wounded *Goliath*, 2 Sam. xvii. 40. so faith puts the promises, as stones, into its sling, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. *He will not break the bruised reed*, Matth. xii. 20. *He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able*. 1 Cor. x. 13. *The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet*. Rom. xvi. 20. *None shall pluck you out of my Father's hands*, John x. 29. Here are five promises, like five stones, put in the sling of faith, and with these a believer wounds the red-dragon. Now faith being such a grace, that doth so resist and wound Satan, he will watch his opportunity that he may batter our shield, tho' he cannot break it.

2dly. Satan strikes most at our faith, and would weaken and destroy it, because faith hath

a great influence upon all the other graces; faith sets all the graces a-work. Like some rich clothier, that gives out a stock of wool to the poor, and sets them all a-spinning; so faith gives out a stock to all the other graces, and sets them a-working. Faith sets love a-work, *Gal. v. 6. Faith which worketh by love*. When once the soul believes God's love, this kindles love to God.

The believing martyrs burned hotter in love than in fire. Faith sets repentance a-work. When the soul believes there is *mercy* to be had, and that this mercy is for *him*, this sets the eyes a-weeping: O, faith the soul, that ever I should offend such a gracious God! Repenting tears drop from the eye of faith, *Mark ix. 24. The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe*. Faith set his eyes abroad with tears; therefore the devil hath most spite at faith, and by his temptations would undermine it, because it is such an operative grace, it sets all the other graces on work. If the devil cannot *destroy* our faith, yet if he can *disturb* it, if he can hinder and stop the acting of faith, he knows all the other graces will be lame and unactive. If the spring in a watch be stopped, it will hinder the motion of the wheels: if faith be down, all the other graces are at a stand.

21. *Subtilty* of Satan in tempting, is, in broaching those doctrines that are *flesh-pleasing*. Satan knows the flesh loves to be gratified, it cries out for ease and liberty; it will not endure any yoke, unless it be lined and made soft. The devil will be sure so to lay his bait of temptation, as to please and humour the flesh. The word faith, *Strive as in an agony* to enter into glory; crucify the flesh; take the kingdom of heaven by holy violence: now Satan, to enervate and weaken these scriptures, comes with temptations and flatters the flesh; he tells men, there needs no such strictness: why so much zeal and violence? a softer pace will serve; sure there is an easier way to heaven: there needs no breaking the heart for sin; do but confess to a priest, or tell over a few beads, or say some *Ave Maries*, and this will procure you a pardon, and give you admission into paradise. Or, the devil can go another way to work; if he sees men startle at popery, then he stirs up the flattering *Antinomian*, and he comes in another disguise, and faith, what needs all this cost? what needs repenting tears? these are legal. What need you be so strict in your obedience?



dience? Christ hath done all for you, you may make use of your *christian liberty*: this temptation draws many away; it takes them off from strictness of life. He who sells cheapest shall have most customers; the devil knows this is a cheap easy doctrine, which will please the flesh, and he doth not doubt but he shall have customers enough.

22. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting, is, in reference to *holy duties*. His policy is either to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty.

I. To hinder from duty, as 1 *Theff.* ii. 18. *I would have come once and again, but Satan hindered me.* So many duties of religion had been performed, but Satan hindered. The hand of *Joab* is in this. There are three duties which the devil is an enemy to, and labours to keep us from.

1. *Meditation*. He will let men profess, or pray and hear in a formal manner; this doth him no hurt, nor them no good; but he doth oppose meditation, as being a means to compose the heart, and make it serious. Satan can stand your small shot, so if you do not put in this bullet: he cares not how much you hear, nor how little you meditate. Meditation is a *chewing of the cud*, it makes the word digest, and turn to nourishment; meditation is the bellows of the affections; the devil is an enemy to this. When Christ was alone in the wilderness, giving himself to divine contemplations, then the devil comes and tempts him, to hinder him. He will thrust in worldly business, something or other to keep men off from holy meditation.

2. *Duty*, which Satan, by tempting, would keep us from, is, *mortification*. This is as needful as heaven, *Col.* iii. 5. *Mortify your members which are upon earth, uncleanness, inordinate affection.* Satan will let men be angry with sin, exchange sin, restrain sin, which is keeping sin prisoner, that it doth not break out; but when it comes to the taking away the life of sin, Satan labours to stop the warrant, and hinders the execution. When sin is mortifying, Satan is crucifying.

3. *Self-examination*, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves*: a metaphor from metal, that is pierced thorow, to see if it be gold within. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition set up in one's soul: a man must search his heart for sin, as one would search a house for a traitor; or, as *Israel* sought for leaven to burn it. Sa-

tan, if it be possible, will by his temptations keep men from this duty; he useth a great deal of subtily.

(1.) Here, first he tells them, their estate is good, and what need they put themselves to the trouble of examination? Though men will not take their money on trust, but will examine it by the touch-stone, yet Satan persuades them to take their grace on trust. The devil persuaded the foolish virgins, they had oil in their lamps.

(2.) Satan hath another policy, he will shew men the *faults of others*, to keep them from searching their own: see what a proud covetous man goes there. He will allow them *spectacles* to see what is amiss in others, but not a *looking-glass* to behold their own faces, and see what is amiss in themselves.

II. Satan's policy is, to discourage us in duty. When one hath been about the performing of holy duties, then the devil stands up and tells him, he hath played the hypocrite; he hath served God for a *livery*; he hath had sinister ends: his duties have been full of distraction; they have been fly-blown with pride: he hath offered the blind and lame, and can he expect a reward from God? Satan tells a christian, he hath increased his sin by prayer; and, by this temptation, he would make a child of God quite out of conceit with his duties, he knows not whether he had best pray or no.

III. Or *thirdly*, If this plot will not take, Satan labours by temptation to put a christian on too far in duty: if he cannot keep a child of God from duty, he will run him on too far in it. For instance, humiliation and mourning for sin is a duty, but Satan will put one on too far in it; thou art not (saith he) humbled enough; and indeed Satan never thinks a man is humbled enough, till he despairs. He would make a christian wade so far in the waters of repentance, that he should wade beyond his depth, and be drowned in the gulph of despair. Satan comes thus to the soul, Thy sins have been great, and thy sorrows should be *proportionable to your sins*. But is it so? canst thou say thou hast been as great a mourner as thou hast been a sinner? thou didst for many years drive no other trade but sin, and is a drop of sorrow enough for a sea of sin? No: thy soul must be more humbled, and ly sleeping longer in the brinish waters of repentance. Satan would have a christian weep himself blind, and in a desperate mood throw away the anchor of hope.



Now, lest any here be troubled with this temptation, let me say this, this is a mere fallacy of Satan; for sorrow proportionable to sin is not attainable in this life, nor doth God expect it. It is sufficient for thee (christian) if thou hast a gospel-sorrow; if thou grieveest so far as to see sin hateful, and Christ precious; if thou grieveest so as to break off iniquity; if thy remorse end in divorce, this is to be humbled enough. Then the gold hath lain long enough in the fire, when the *dross* is purged out; then a christian hath lain long enough in humiliation, when the love of sin is purged out; this is to be humbled enough to divine acceptance. God, for Christ's sake, will accept of this sorrow for sin; therefore let not Satan's temptations drive to *despair*. You see how subtil an enemy he is, to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty, that he may run them upon the rock of despair. Had we not then need (having such a subtil enemy) pray, *Lord, lead us not into temptation*? As the serpent beguiled *Eve*, let us not be beguiled by this hellish *Machiavel*.

23. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting to the act of sin, is the hopes of returning out of it by speedy repentance. But this is a fallacy: it is easy for the bird to fly into the snare, but it is not easy to get out of the snare. Is it so facile a thing to repent? Are there no pangs in the new birth? is it easy to leap out of *Delilah's* lap into *Abraham's* bosom? how many has Satan flattered into hell by this policy, that if they sin, they may recover themselves by repentance? Alas! is repentance in our power? a spring-lock can shut of itself, but it cannot open without a key: we can shut of ourselves to God, but we cannot open by repentance, till God open our heart, who hath the *key of David* in his hand.

24. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting, is, to put us upon doing that which is good *unseasonably*.

(1) To *mourn for sin* is a duty; the sacrifices of God are a *broken heart*, Psalm li. 17. But yet there is a time when it may not be so *seasonable*: after some eminent deliverance, which calls for rejoicing, now to have the spirits dyed of a sad colour, and to sit weeping, is not *seasonable*. There was a special time at the feast of tabernacles, when God called his people to cheerfulness, *Deut. xvi. 15. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast to the lord thy God, and thou shalt surely rejoice*. Now, if at this time,

the *Israelites* had hung their harps upon the willows, and been disconsolate, it had been very unseasonable, like mourning at a wedding. When God by his providence calls us to thanksgiving, and we set drooping, and, with *Rachel*, refuse to be comforted, this is very evil, and favours of ingratitude. This is Satan's temptation; the hand of *Joab* is in this.

(2) To rejoice is a duty, *Psalms xxxiii. 1. Praise is comely for the upright*. But when God, by his judgments, calls us to weeping, now joy and mirth is unseasonable, *Isa. xxii. 12. In that day did the Lord call to weeping, and behold joy and gladness*.

*Oecolampadius*, and other learned writers, think it was in the time of king *Abaz*, when the signs of God's anger, like a blazing star, did appear: now to be given to mirth was very unseasonable.

(3.) To read the word is a duty, but Satan will sometimes put men upon it when it is unseasonable. To read it at home when God's word is preaching, or the sacrament administering, is unseasonable, yea sinful. *Hushai* said, *2 Sam. xvii. 7. The counsel is not good at this time*. There was a set time enjoined for the passover, when the *Jews* were to bring their offering to the Lord, *Numb. ix. 2*. Had the people been reading the law at home in the time of the passover, it had not been in season, and God would have punished it for a contempt. This is the devil's subtil temptation, either to keep us from duty, or to put us upon it, when it is least in season. Duties of religion not well timed, and done in season, are dangerous. Snow and hail are good for the ground when they come in their season; but in harvest, when the corn is ripe, then a storm of hail would do hurt.

25. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting, is, to persuade men to delay their repenting and turning to God. He saith, as *Hag. i. 2. The time is not yet come*. Now youth is budding, or you are but in the flower of your age, it is too soon to repent, *The time is not yet come*. This temptation is the devil's draw-net, by which he draws millions to hell: it is a dangerous temptation. Sin is *dulce venenum*, Beñ. a *poison*; the longer poison lies in the body, the more mortal: by delay of repentance, sin strengthens, and the heart hardens. The longer ice freezeth, the harder it is to be broken: the longer a man freezeth in impenitency, the more difficult it will be to have his heart broken. When sin hath gotten an haunt, it is not easily shaken off. Besides,

fides, the danger of this temptation to delay repentance, appears in this, because life is hazardous, and may on a sudden expire. What security have you that you shall live another day? Life is made up of a few flying minutes; it is a taper soon blown out, *Jam. iv. 14. What is your life? It is but a vapour.* The body is like a vessel, tunned with a little breath; sickness broacheth this vessel, death draws it out: how dangerous therefore is this temptation, to procrastinate and put off turning to God by repentance! Many now in hell did purpose to repent, but death surprized them.

26. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to infringe and weaken the saints peace. If he cannot destroy their grace, he will disturb their peace. Satan envies a christian should have a good day; and if he cannot keep them from heaven, he will keep him from an heaven upon earth. There is nothing (next to holiness) a christian prizeth more, than peace and tranquillity of mind: this is the cream of life, a bunch of grapes by the way. Now, it is Satan's great policy to shake a christian's peace; that, if he will go to heaven, he shall go thither through frights, and plenty of tears. The devil throws in his fire-balls of temptation, to set the saints peace on fire. Of such great concern is spiritual peace, that no wonder if Satan would, by his intricate subtilties, rob us of this jewel.

Spiritual peace is a token of God's favour. As *Joseph* had a special testimony of his father's kindness in the party-coloured coat he gave him; so have the saints a special token of God's good-will to them, when he gives them inward peace, which is, as it were, the party-coloured coat to wear. No wonder then, if Satan so much rage against the saints peace, and would tear off this comfortable robe from them.

The devil troubles the waters of the saints peace, because hereby he hopes to have the more advantage of them.

(1.) By this perplexing of their spirits, Satan takes off their chariot-wheels; unfits them for the service of God: body and mind are both out of temper, like an instrument out of tune. Sadness of spirit prevailing, a christian can think of nothing but his troubles; his mind is full of doubts, fears, surmises; that he is like a person distracted, and is scarce himself: either he neglects the duties of religion, or his mind is taken off from them while he is doing them. Especially there is one duty that melancholy and sadness of spirit unfits for, and that is *thankfulness*.

Thankfulness is a tribute or quit-rent due to God, *Pf. cxlix. 3. Let the saints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouth.* But when Satan hath disturbed a christian's spirit, and filled his mind full of black, and almost despairing thoughts, how can he be thankful? It rejoiceth Satan to see how his plot takes; by making God's children *unquiet*, he makes them *unthankful*.

(2.) Satan, by troubling the saints peace, hath this advantage of laying a stumbling-block in the way of others: by this policy, the devil gets an occasion to render the ways of God unlovely to those who are looking heaven-ward. He sets before *new beginners*, the perplexing thoughts, the tears, the groans of them who are *wounded in spirit*, to fear them quite off from all seriousness in religion. He will object to *new beginners*, Do you not see how these sad souls torture themselves with melancholy thoughts, and will you change the comforts and pleasures of this life to sit always in the house of mourning? will you espouse that religion, which makes you a terror to yourselves, and a burden to others? can you be in love with such a religion, as is ready to fright you out of your wits? This advantage the devil gets by troubling the saints peace, he would discourage others who are looking towards heaven; he would beat them off from prayer, and hearing all soul-awakening sermons, lest they fall into this black humour of melancholy, and end their days in despair.

(3.) By this subtil policy of Satan, in disturbing the saints peace, and making them believe God doth not love them, he hath this advantage, he sometimes so far prevails over them, as to make them begin to entertain hard thoughts of God. Through the black spectacles of melancholy, God's dealings look sad and ghastly. Satan tempts the godly to have strange thoughts of God: to think he hath cast off all pity, and hath *forgotten to be gracious*, *Pf. lxxvii.* and to make *sad conclusions*, *Isa. xxxviii. 13. I reckoned, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones; from day, even to night, wilt thou make an end of me.* The devil setting in with melancholy, causeth a sad eclipse in the soul; it begins to think, God hath shut up the springs of mercy, and there is no hope. Hereupon Satan getteth further advantage of a troubled spirit; sometimes he puts the troubled soul upon sinful *wishes* and *execrations* against itself: *Job*, in distemper of mind, *curst his birth-day*,  
Job



Job iii. 3. *Job*, though he did not curse his God, yet he cursed his birth-day: Thus you see what advantages the devil gets by raising storms, and troubling the saints peace: and let me tell you, if the devil is capable of any delight, it is to see the saints disquiets; their groans are his music: 'tis a sport to him to see them torture themselves upon the wrack of melancholy, and almost drown themselves in tears. When the godly have unjust surmises of God, question his love, deny the work of grace, and fall to wishing they had never been born; now Satan is ready to clap his hands, and shout for a victory.

Having shewn you the advantages the devil gets by this temptation of disturbing the saints peace, I shall answer a question, *By what arts and methods doth Satan, in tempting, disturb the saints peace?*

*Ans.* (1.) Satan slyly conveys evil thoughts, and then makes a christian believe they come from his own heart. The cup was found in *Benjamin's* sack, but it was of *Joseph's* putting in; so a child of God oft finds atheistical, blasphemous thoughts in his mind, but Satan hath cast them in. The devil doth, as some, lay their children at another's door; so Satan lays his temptations at our door, fathers them upon us; and then we trouble ourselves about them, and nurse them, as if they were our own.

(2.) Satan disturbs the saints peace, by drawing forth their sins in the most black colours, to affright them, and make them ready to give up the ghost. Satan is called the *accuser of the brethren*; not only because he accuseth them to God, but accuseth them to themselves: he tells them, they are guilty of such sins, and they are hypocrites; whereas the sins of a believer shew only that grace is not perfect, not that he hath no grace. When Satan comes with this temptation, shew him that scripture, *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.*

27. *Subtily* of Satan is, by plausible arguments, to tempt men to be *sebo de se*, to make away themselves. This temptation doth not only stop the current of scripture, but is abhorring to nature, to be one's own executioner: yet such cunning artifices hath Satan, that he persuades many to lay violent hands upon themselves, which the bills of mortality witness. (1.) He tempts some to do this in *terror of conscience*, telling them, All the hell they shall have is in their conscience, and death will give

them present ease. (2.) He tempts others to make away themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God. (3.) Others he tempts to make away themselves, that they may presently arrive at happiness; he tells them, the best of saints desire heaven, and the sooner they are there the better.

*Austin* speaks of *Cleombrotas*, who hearing *Plato* read a lecture of the immortality of the soul, and the joys of the other world, se in præcipitium deiecit; threw himself down a steep precipice, or rock, and killed himself. This is Satan's plot; but we must not break prison, by laying violent hands upon ourselves, but stay till God send and open the door. Let us pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* Still bear in mind that scripture, *Exod. xx. 13. Thou shalt not kill. Clamitat in cælum vox sanguinis*-----If we may not kill another, much less ourselves; and take heed of discontent, which often opens the door to self-murder.

Thus I have shewn you 27 subtilties of Satan in tempting, that so you may the better know them, and avoid them.

There is a story of a Jew that should have poisoned *Luther*; but a friend sent to *Luther* the picture of this Jew, warning him to take heed of such a man when he saw him; by which means he knew the murderer, and escaped his hands. I have told you the subtil devices of Satan in tempting; I have shewn you (as it were) the picture of him that would murder you: I beseech you, being forewarned, take heed of the murderer.

1st, *Use.* From this subtilty of Satan in tempting, let me draw two inferences.

1. It may administer matter of wonder to us how any soul is saved. How may we admire, that Satan, this *Abaddon*, or angel of the bottomless pit, *Rev. ix. 11. this Apollyon*, this soul-devourer, doth not ruin all mankind! What a wonder is it that some are preserved, that neither Satan's *hidden snares* prevail, nor his *fiery darts*; that neither the *head of the serpent*, nor the *paw of the lion* destroys them? Sure it will be matter of admiration to the saints, when they come to heaven, to think how strangely they came thither; that notwithstanding all the force and fraud, the power and policy of hell, yet they should arrive safe at the heavenly port: this is through the safe conduct of Christ, the captain of our salvation; *Michael* is too hard for the dragon.

2. Is Satan so subtil? See then what need we have to pray to God for wisdom to discern the snares of Satan, and strength to resist them: we cannot of ourselves stand against temptation; if we could, this prayer were needless, *lead us not, &c.* Let us not think we can be too cunning for the devil, we can escape his wiles and darts. If *David* and *Peter*, who were pillars in God's temple, fell by temptation, how soon should such weak reeds as we be blown down, did God leave us. Take Christ's advice, *Mat. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*

*Inference* 3. See what the end of all Satan's subtilties in tempting is, he is a tempter; that he may be an accuser. He lays the plot, enticeth men to sin, and then brings in the indictment; as if one should make another drunk, and then complain of him to the magistrate for being drunk. The devil is first a tempter, and then an informer; first a liar, and then a murderer.

Having shewen you the subtilties of Satan in tempting, I shall answer two questions;

Qu. 1. *Why doth God suffer his saints to be so hurried and buffeted by Satan's temptations?*

Ans. The Lord doth it for many wise and holy ends.

(1.) He lets them be tempted to try them. The Hebrew word *nissa* in *pybil*, signifies both to tempt and to try; temptation is a touchstone, to try what is in the heart; the devil tempts that he may deceive, but God lets us be tempted to try us. *Qui non tentatur non probatur*, Aug.

1. Hereby God tries our sincerity. *Job's* sincerity was tried by temptation; the devil told God that *Job* was an hypocrite, and served God only for a livery; but faith he, touch him (that is, let me tempt him) and then see if he will not curse thee to thy face? *Job i. 11.* Well God did let the devil touch him by a temptation, yet *Job* remains holy, he worships God, and bleseth God, *v. 20, 21.* Here *Job's* sincerity was proved; *Job* had fiery temptations, but he came out of the fire, a golden Christian. *Temptation is a touchstone of sincerity.*

2. By temptation, God tries our love. The wife of *Tigranes* did never so shew her chastity and love to her husband, as when she was tempted by *Cyrus*, but did not yield; so, our love to God is seen in this, when we can look a temptation in the face, and turn our back upon it; though the devil come as a serpent

subtilly, and offers a golden apple, yet we will not touch the forbidden fruit. When the devil shewed Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, such was Christ's love to his father, that he abhorred the temptation. True love will not be bribed. When the devil's darts are most fiery, a saint's love to God is most fervent.

3. By temptation, God tries our courage, *Hos. vii. 11. Ephraim is a silly dove without an heart.* So it may be said of many, they are *ex corde*, without an heart; they have no heart to resist a temptation; no sooner doth Satan come with his solicitations, but they yield like a coward, as soon as the thief approacheth, he delivers his purse; but he is the valorous Christian, that brandisheth the sword of the spirit against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The courage of the *Romans* was never more seen than when they were assaulted by the *Carthaginians*; the heroic spirit of a saint is never more seen than in a field-battle, when he is fighting with the red dragon, and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight. *Fidei robur potest esse concussum, non excussum*, Tertul. This is one reason why God lets his people be tempted, that their metal may be tried, their sincerity, love, magnanimity; when grace is proved, the gospel is honoured.

2. God suffers his children to be tempted, that they may be kept from pride. *Quos non gula superavit*, Cypr. Pride crept once into the angels, and into the apostles, when they disputed which of them should be greatest; and in *Peter*, though all men forsake thee, yet I will not, as if he had had more grace than all the apostles. Pride keeps grace low, that it cannot thrive; as the spleen swells, so the other parts of the body consume; as pride grows, so grace consumes. God resists pride, and, that he may keep his children humble, he suffers them sometimes to fall into temptation, *2 Cor. xii. 7. Lest I should be exalted, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me*: when Paul was lifted up in revelations, he was in danger to be lifted up in pride: now came the messenger of Satan to buffet him: that was, some sore temptation to humble him. The thorn in the flesh was to prick the bladder of pride; better is that temptation that humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud. Rather than a Christian shall be proud, God lets him fall



fall into the devil's hands a while, that he may be cured of his imposthume.

(3.) God lets his people be tempted, that they may be fitter to comfort others, as are in the same distress; they can speak a word in *due season* to such as are weary. St. Paul was trained up in the fencing-school of temptation, 2 Cor. ii. 11. And he was able to acquaint others with Satan's wiles and stratagems. A man that hath rid over a place where there art *quick-sands* is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way; he who hath been buffeted by Satan, and hath felt the claws of this roaring lion, is the fittest man to deal with one that is tempted.

(4.) God lets his children be tempted, to make them long more for heaven, where they shall be out of gunshot; there they shall be freed from the hissing of the old serpent. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he doth vex and molest the saints; he lays his snares, throws his fire-balls, but this is only to make the people of God long to be gone from hence, and that they may pray that they had *the wings of a dove*, to fly away beyond Satan's temptations. God suffered Israel to be vexed with the Egyptians, that they might long the more to be in Canaan. Heaven is the *centrum*, a place of rest, *centrum quietativum*; no bullets of temptation fly there. The eagle that soars aloft in the air, and sits peaching upon the tops of high trees, is not troubled with the stinging of serpents; so, when believers are gotten above into the empyrean heaven, they shall not be stung with the old serpent. The devil is cast out of the heavenly paradise. Heaven is compared to an exceeding high mountain, Rev. xxi. 10. It is so high, that Satan's fiery darts cannot reach up to it. *Nullus ibi hostium metus, nullæ insidiæ dæmonum*, Bern.

The temptations here are to make the saints long till death sound a retreat, and call them off the field where the bullets of temptation fly so thick, that they may receive a victorious crown. Thus I have answered this question, why God lets his dear servants be tempted.

Qu. What rocks of support are there, or what comfort for tempted souls?

Ans. 1st. That it is not *our case* alone, but hath been the case of God's eminent saints, 1 Cor. x. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you, but that which is common to man*, yea, to the best: men, Christ's lambs, which have had the

ear-mark of election upon them, have been set upon by the wolf. *Elijah*, that could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation, 1 Kings xix. 4. *Job* was tempted to curse God, *Peter* to deny Christ; hardly ever any saint hath got to heaven, but hath met with a lion by the way: *fortem quam omnes sancti patiuntur nemo recusat*. Nay, Jesus Christ himself, though he were free from sin, yet not from temptation; we read of Christ's baptism, Mat. iii. and, Mat. v. 1. *Then was he led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil*. No sooner was Christ out of the water of baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation: and if the devil would set upon Christ, no wonder if he set upon us. There was no sin in Christ, no powder for the devil's fire; temptation to Christ, was like a bur on a chrystal-glass which glides off, or like a spark of fire on a marble-pillar, which will not stick; yet Satan was so bold as to tempt Christ. This is some comfort, such as have been our *bettors*, have wrestled with temptations.

2d. *Rock of support*, that may comfort a tempted soul, is, that temptations (where they are burdens) *evidence grace*. Satan doth not tempt God's children, because they have sin in them, but because they have grace in them. Had they no grace, the devil would not disturb them: where he keeps possession, all is *in peace*; Luke xi. 21. His temptations are to rob the saints of their grace. A thief will not assault an empty house, but where he thinks there is treasure; a pirate will not set upon an empty ship, but that is full fraught with spices and jewels; so the devil most assaults the people of God, because he thinks they have a rich treasure of grace in their hearts, and he would rob them of that. What makes so many cudgels be thrown at a tree, but because there is so much fruit hanging upon it? The devil throws his temptations at you, because he sees you have so much fruit of grace growing upon you. Tho' to be tempted is a *trouble*, yet to think why you are tempted is a *comfort*.

3d *Rock of support or comfort*, is, that Jesus Christ is *near at hand*, and *stands by us* in all our temptations. Here take notice of two things.

1. Christ's sympathy in temptation. 2. Christ's succour in temptation.

(1.) Christ's sympathy in our temptations. *Nobis compatitur Christus*.

Heb. iv. 15. *We have not an high priest who*

cannot

cannot be touched *with the feeling of our infirmities*. Jesus Christ doth sympathize with us; he is so sensible of our temptations, as if he himself lay under them, and did feel them in his own soul. As in music, when one string is touched all the rest sound, so Christ's bowels sound; we cannot be *tempted*, but he is *touched*. If you saw a wolf worry your child, would you not pity your child? You cannot pity it so as Christ doth tempted ones. Christ had a fellow-feeling when he was upon earth, much more now in glory.

Qu. *But how can it stand with Christ's glory now in heaven, to have a fellow-feeling of our miseries and temptations?*

Ans. This fellow-feeling in Christ riseth not from any infirmity or passion, but from the mystical union between him and his members, *Zech. ii. 8. He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye*. Every injury done to a saint, Christ takes as done to him in heaven; every temptation is a striking at Christ, and he is touched with the feeling of our temptations.

(2.) Christ's succour in temptation. As the good Samaritan first had compassion on the wounded man, there was sympathy, then he poured in wine and oil, there was succour, *Luke x. 34*. So when we are wounded by the red dragon, Christ is first touched with compassion, and then he pours in wine and oil, *Heb. ii. 18. In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted*. The Greek word to succour [*boethesai*] signifies to run speedily to one's help; so fierce is Satan, so frail is man, that Christ, who is God-man, runs speedily to his help. When Peter was ready to sink, and said, *Lord save me*, Christ presently stretched forth his hand, and caught him; so when a poor soul is tempted, and cries to heaven for help, *Lord, save me*, Christ comes in with his auxiliary forces: *nescit Christus*, our Lord Jesus knows what it is to be tempted; therefore is so ready to succour such as are tempted. It hath been an observation, that child-bearing women are more pitiful to others in their travails, than such women as are barren; so the Lord Jesus, having been in travail by temptations and sufferings, is more ready to pity and succour such as are tempted.

Concerning Christ's succouring the tempted, consider two things; (1.) Christ's ability, (2.) His agility to succour.

1<sup>st</sup> Christ's ability to succour, *Heb. ii. 18. He*

*is able to succour them that are tempted*. Christ is called *Michael*, *Rev. xii. 7.* which signifies, *Who is like God*. Though the tempted soul is weak, yet he fights under a good captain, the lion of the tribe of Judah. When a tempted soul fights, Christ comes into the field as his second. Michael will be too hard for the dragon; when the devil lays the siege of a temptation; Christ can raise the siege when he pleases; he can beat through the enemy's quarters, and can so rout Satan that he shall never be able to rally his forces any more. Jesus Christ is on the saint's side, and who would desire a better life-guard than omnipotency?

2<sup>dly</sup>. Christ's agility in succouring. As Christ is able to succour the tempted, so he will certainly succour them. Christ's power enables him, his love inclines him, his faithfulness engageth him to succour tempted souls. This is a great comfort to a soul in temptation, he hath a succouring saviour. As God did succour Israel in the wilderness among fiery serpents, they had the rock set abroad, the manna, the pillar of cloud, the brazen serpent; what was this but a type of God's succouring a poor soul in the wilderness of temptation, stung with the devil that fiery serpent? Alexander being asked, how he could sleep so securely, when his enemies were about him, said, *Antipater is awake, who is always vigilant*. So, when our tempting enemy is near us, Jesus Christ is awake, who is a wall of fire about us. There is a great deal of succour to the tempted in the names given to Christ: as Satan's names may terrify, so Christ's names may succour. The devil is called *Apollyon*, the *desourer*, *Rev. ix. 11*. Christ is called a *Saviour*: the devil is called the *strong man*, *Mat. xii. 29*. Christ is called *El Gibbor*, the *mighty God*, *Is. ix. 6*. The devil is called the *accuser*, *Rev. xii. 10*. Christ is called the *advocate*, *1 John ii. 1*. The devil is called the *tempter*, *Mat. iv. 3*. Christ is called the *comforter*, *Luke ii. 25*. The devil is called the *prince of darkness*. Christ is called the *son of righteousness*. The devil is called the *old serpent*, Christ is called the *brazen serpent* that heals, *John iii. 15*.

Thus the very names of Christ have some succour in them for tempted souls.

Qu. *How, and in what manner, doth Christ succour them that are tempted?*

Ans. Several ways;

1. Christ succours them, by sending his spirit, whose work it is to bring those promises to



their mind, which are fortifying, *John* xiv. 26. *He shall bring all things to your remembrance.* The spirit furnisheth us with promises, as so many weapons to fight against the old-serpent, *Rom.* xvi. 20. *The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet.* *1 Cor.* x. 13. *God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.* *Gen.* iii. 15. *The seed of the woman shall break the Serpent's head.* We are oft in times of temptation, as a man that hath his house beset, and cannot find his weapons, he hath his sword and gun to seek: now, in this case, Christ sends his spirit, and he brings things to our remembrance; that helps us in our combat with Satan. The spirit of Christ doth to one that is tempted, as *Aaron* and *Hur* did to *Moses*, they put a stone under him, and held up his hands, and then *Israel* prevailed; so God's spirit puts the promises under the hand of faith, and then a Christian overcomes the devil, that spiritual *Amalek*. The promise is to the soul, as the anchor is to a ship, which keeps it steady in a storm.

2. Christ succours them that are tempted by his blessed interceding for them. When the devil is tempting, Christ is praying, of this the next time.

2dly. Christ succours his saints by interceding for them, when Satan is tempting, Christ is praying. That prayer Christ put up for *Peter* when he was tempted, extends to all the saints, *Luke* xxii. 32. Lord, saith Christ, it is my child that is tempted; Father, pity him. When a poor soul lies bleeding of his wounds the devil hath given him, Christ presents his wounds to his Father, and, in the virtue of those, pleads for mercy. How powerful must Christ's prayer needs be? He is a favourite, *John* xi. 42. He is both an high-priest and a son: if God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a son. Besides, Christ prays for nothing but what is agreeable to his father's will: if a king's son petitions only for that which his father hath a mind to grant, his suit will not be denied.

3. Christ succours his people, by taking off the tempter. A shepherd, when the sheep begins to straggle, may set the dog on the sheep to bring it nearer the fold, but then he calls off the dog again; God will take off the tempter, *1 Cor.* x. 13. *He will with the temptation make a way to escape*, he will make an outlet. Christ will rebuke the tempter, *Zech.* iii. 2. *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.* This is no

small support, that Christ succours the tempted. The mother succours the child most when it is sick; she sits by its bed-side, brings it cordials; so, when a soul is most assaulted, it shall be most assisted.

Obj. *But I have dealt unkindly with Christ, and sinned against his love; and sure he will not succour me, but let me perish in the battle.*

Ans. Christ is a merciful high priest, and will succour thee notwithstanding thy failings. *Joseph* was a type of Christ; his brethren sold him away, and the irons entred into his soul: yet afterwards, when his brethren were ready to die in the famine, he forgot their injuries, and succoured them with money and corn; *I am*, saith he, *Joseph your brother*: so will Christ say to a tempted soul, *I know thy unkindnesses, thou hast distrusted my love, grieved my spirit; but I am Joseph, I am Jesus, therefore I will succour thee, when thou art tempted.*

4th. Rock of support. The best man may be most tempted. A rich ship may be violently set upon by pirates: he who is rich in faith, yet may have the devil (that pirate) set upon them by his battering pieces. *Job*, an eminent saint, yet how fiercely was he assaulted? Satan did smite his body that he might tempt him, either to question God's providence, or quarrel with it. *St. Paul* was a chosen vessel, but how was this vessel battered with temptation? *2 Cor.* xii. 17.

Obj. *But is it not said, He who is born of God, the wicked one toucheth him not?* *1 John* v. 18.

Ans. It is not meant, that the devil doth not tempt him, but he toucheth him not, that is *tactu lethali*, *Cajetan*. with a deadly touch. *1 John* v. 16. *There is a sin unto death.* Now Satan with all his temptations doth not make a child of God sin a sin unto death. Thus he toucheth him not.

5th. Rock of support. Satan can go no further in tempting than God will give him leave: the power of the tempter is limited. A whole legion of devils could not touch one swine, till Christ gave them leave: Satan would have sifted *Peter* to have sifted out all his grace; but Christ would not suffer him, *I have prayed for thee, &c.* Christ binds the devil in a chain, *Rev.* xx. 1. If Satan's power were according to his malice, not one soul should be saved; but he is a chained enemy, this is a comfort, Satan cannot go a hairs-breadth beyond God's permission. If an enemy could not touch a child further

further than the father did appoint, sure he should do the child no great hurt.

*6th Rock of support.* It is not the having a temptation makes guilty, but the giving consent; we cannot hinder a temptation; *Elijah*, that could by prayer shut heaven, could not shut out a temptation; but if we abhor the temptation, it is our *burden* not our *sin*. We read in the old law, if one went to force a virgin, and she cried out, she was reputed innocent; if Satan would by temptation commit a rape upon a christian, and he cries out, and will not give consent, the Lord will charge it upon the devil's score. It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish doth not bite.

*7th Rock of support.* Our being tempted is *no sign of God's hating us*. A child of God oft thinks, God doth not love him, because he lets him be haunted with the devil; *non sequitur*, this is a wrong conclusion: was not Christ himself tempted? yet by a voice from heaven proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son*, Mat. iii. 17. Satan's tempting, and God's loving, may stand together. The goldsmith loves his gold in the fire; God loves a saint, though shot at by fiery darts.

*8th Rock of support.* Christ's temptation was for our consolation, *Aquagnis*. Jesus Christ is to be looked upon as a *public person*, as our head and representative; and what Christ did, he did for us; his prayer was for us, his suffering was for us; when he was tempted, and overcame the temptation, he overcame for us. Christ's conquering Satan, was to shew that elect person shall at last be a conqueror over Satan: when Christ overcame Satan's temptation, it was not only to give us an example of courage, but an assurance of conquest: we have overcome Satan already in our head, and we shall at last perfectly overcome.

*9th. Rock of support.* The saints temptations shall not be *above their strength*. The lutenist will not stretch the strings of his lute too hard lest they break, 1 Cor. x. 13. *God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able*. God will proportion our strength to the stroke, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee*. The torch light of faith shall be kept burning, notwithstanding all the winds of temptation blowing.

*10th. Rock of support.* These temptations shall produce much good.

1. They shall quicken a *spirit of prayer* in the saints, they shall pray more and better.

temptation is *orationis stabellum*, the exciter of prayer: perhaps, before, the saints come to God as cold suiters in prayer, they prayed as if they prayed not. Temptation is a medicine for security; when *Paul* had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, he was more earnest in prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8. *Three times I besought the Lord*; the *thorn in the flesh* was a spur in his sides to quicken him in prayer. The deer being shot with the dart, runs faster to the water; when a soul is shot with the fiery darts of temptation, he runs the faster to the throne of grace; now he is earnest with God, either to take off the tempter, or to stand by him when he is tempted.

2. God makes the temptation to sin a means to prevent sin. The more a christian is tempted, the more he fights against the temptation; the more a chaste woman is assaulted, the more she abhors the motion: the stronger *Joseph's* temptation was, the stronger was his opposition. The more the enemy attempts to storm a castle, the more he is repelled and beat back.

3. Godly temptations causeth the increase of grace. *Unus Christianus temptatus mille: one tempted Christian* (saith *Luther*) *is worth a thousand*. He grows more in grace: as the bellows increaseth the flame; so the bellows of a temptation doth increase the flame of grace.

4. By these temptations God makes way for comfort; as Christ after he was tempted, the angels came and ministered unto him, Mat. iv. 11. As, when *Abraham* had been warring, *Melchisedeck* brought him bread and wine to revive his spirits, Gen. xiv. 18. So, after the saints have been warring with Satan, now God sends his spirit to comfort them; which made *Luther* say, that temptations were *amplexus Christi*, Christ's embraces, because he doth then most sweetly manifest himself to the soul. Thus you see what rocks of support there are for tempted souls.

That I may further comfort such as are tempted, let me speak to two cases of the tempted.

1<sup>st</sup>. Case. *I have horrid temptations to blasphemy.*

*Ans.* Did not the devil tempt Christ after this manner? Mat. iv. 9. *All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*. What greater blasphemy can be imagined, than that the God of heaven and earth should wor-



ship the devil? Yet Christ was tempted to this. If when blasphemous thoughts are injected, you tremble at them, and are in a cold sweat, they are not *yours*, Satan shall answer for them; let him that plots the treason, suffer.

*2d. Case. But my case is yet worse: I have been tempted to such sins, and have yielded: the tempter hath overcome me.*

*Ans.* I grant that through the withdrawing of God's grace, and the force of a temptation, a child of God may be overcome. *David* was overcome by a temptation in case of *Bathsheba*, and numbering the people. There is a party of grace in the heart, true to Christ; but sometimes it may be overvoted by corruption, and then a Christian yields: it is sad to yield thus to the tempter. But yet let not a child of God be wholly discouraged, and say there is no hope: let me pour in some balm of *Gilead* into this wounded soul.

1. Though a Christian may fall by a temptation, yet the seed of God is in him, 1 *John* iii. 9. *His seed remaineth in him. Gratia concutitur, non excutitur*, Aug. A man may be bruised by a fall, yet there is life in him; a Christian, being foiled by Satan, may be like him, who going to *Jericho*, fell among thieves, *wounded and half dead*, Luke x. 30. but still there is a vital principle of grace, his seed remains in him.

2. Though a child of God may be overcome *in paelio*, in a skirmish; yet not *in bello*, in the main battle: an army may be worsted in a skirmish, but overcomes at last. Though Satan may foil a child of God in a skirmish by temptation, yet the believer shall overcome at last: a saint may be foiled, not conquered; he may lose ground, not lose the victory.

3. God doth not judge of his children by one action, but by the frame of their heart: as God doth not judge of a wicked man by one good action, so neither of a godly man by one bad action: a holy person may be worsted by a temptation, but God doth not measure him by that. Who measures milk when it seeths and boils up? God doth not take the measure of a saint, when the devil hath boiled him in a passion, but God judgeth of him by the pulse and temper of his heart: he would fear God; when he fails, he weeps. God looks which way the bias of his heart stands: if his heart be set against sin, God will pardon.

4. God will make a saint's being foiled by temptation, turn to his spiritual advantage.

(1.) He may let a regenerate person fall by

a temptation, to make him more *watchful*: perhaps he walks loosely, and so was decoyed into sin; but for the future, he grows more curious and cautious in his walking. The foiled Christian is a vigilant Christian; he will have a care of coming within the lion's chain any more, he will be shy and fearful of the occasion of sin; he will not go abroad without his spiritual armour, and he girds on his armour by prayer. When a wild beast gets over the hedge and hurts the corn, a man will make his hedge stronger; so, when the devil gets over the hedge by a temptation, and foils a Christian, he will be sure to mend his fence, and be more vigilant against a temptation afterwards.

(2.) God lets his children be sometimes foiled by a temptation, that they may see their *continual dependance* on God, and may go to him for strength. We need not only habitual grace, to stand against temptation, but auxiliary grace; as the boat needs not only the oars, but wind, to carry it against a strong tide. God lets his children sometimes fall by a temptation, that, seeing their own weakness, they may rest more on Christ and free-grace, *Cant.* viii. 5.

(3.) God, by suffering his children to be foiled by a temptation, will *settle them the more in grace*; they shall get strength by their foils. The poets feign, that *Antæus* the Giant, in wrestling with *Hercules*, got strength by every fall to the ground: it is true here; a saint, being foiled in wrestling with Satan, gets more spiritual strength. *Peter* had never such a strengthening in his faith, as after his being foiled in the high priest's hall: how was he fired with zeal, steeled with courage? He who before was dashed out of countenance by the voice of a maid, now dares openly confess Christ before the rulers and the councils, *Acts* ii. 14. The shaking of the tree settles it the more; God lets his children be shaken with the wind of temptation, that they may be more settled in grace afterwards. This I have spoken, that such Christians as God hath suffered to be foiled by temptation, may not cast away their anchor, or give way to sad despairing thoughts.

*Obj.* But this may seem to make Christians careless whether they fall into a temptation or no, if God can make their being foiled by a temptation advantageous to them.

*Ans.* We must distinguish between one who is foiled through *weakness*, and through *willfulness*:

*folness*: if a soldier fights, but is foiled for want of strength, the general of the army will pity him, and bind up his wounds; but if he be wilfully foiled, and proves treacherous, he must expect no favour; so, if a christian fight it out with Satan, but is foiled for want of strength (as it was with *Peter*) God will pity him, and do him good by his being foiled; but if he be foiled wilfully and runs into a temptation (as it was with *Judas*) God will shew him no favour, but will execute martial law upon him.

The *uses* remain.

*Use 1.* See in what continual danger we are. Satan is an exquisite artist, a deep head-piece, he lies in ambush to ensnare; he is the tempter, it is his delight to make the saints sin; and he is subtil in tempting, he hath ways and methods to deceive.

*First*, He brings a saint into sin, by making him *confide in his habitual graces*. Satan makes him believe he hath such a stock of grace, as will antidote him against all temptations: thus Satan deceived *Peter*, he made him trust in his grace; he had such a cable of faith and strong tacklings, that though the winds of temptation did blow never so fierce, he could weather the point; *though all men forsake thee, yet I will not*; as if he had more grace than all the apostles; thus he was led into temptation, and fell in the battle: a man may take an idol of grace. *Habitual grace* is not sufficient without *auxiliary*. The boat needs not only oars, but a gale of wind, to carry it against the tide; so we need not only habitual grace, but the blowing of the spirit, to carry us against a strong temptation.

*Secondly*, Satan tempts to sin by the *baits and allurements* of the world. *Foenus pecuniae funus animae*,-----One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Such as the devil cannot debauch with vice, he will corrupt with money: *all this will I give thee*, was his last temptation, Mat. iv. 9. *Achan* was deluded by a wedge of gold. *Sylvester II.* did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.

*Thirdly*, Satan tempts to sin, *sub specie boni*, under a mask and shew of good; his temptations seem gracious motions.

1. He tempts men to *duties of religion*: you would think this strange, that Satan should tempt to duty; but it is so. 1. He tempts men to duty out of *sinister* ends. Thus he tempted the *Pharisees* to pray and give alms,

*that they might be seen of men*, Mat. vi. 5. Prayer is a duty, but to look askint in prayer, to do it for vain-glory, this prayer is turned into sin. 2. He tempts to duty, when it is *not in season*, Numb. xxviii. 2. *My offering and my bread for my sacrifices shall ye offer unto me in their due season*. Satan tempts to duty when it is out of season; he tempts to read the word at home, when we should be hearing the word: he will so tempt to one duty, as it may hinder another. 3. He tempts some to duty, out of *design* that it may be a *cloke for sin*. He tempts them to frequency in duty, that they may sin and be less suspected. He tempted the *Pharisees* to make long prayers, *that they might devour widows houses* under this pretence, Mat. xxiii. 14. who would suspect him of false weights, that so oft holds a Bible in his hand? Thus cunning is Satan, he tempts to duty.

2. He tempts men to sin, out of a *shew of love to Christ*: you will think this strange, but there is truth in it. Many a good heart may think what he doth is in love to Christ, and all this while he may be under a temptation. Christ told *Peter* he must suffer at *Jerusalem*; *Peter* took him and rebuked him, *Be it far from thee, Lord*, Mat. xvi. 21. as if he had said to Christ, Lord, thou hast deserved no such shameful death, and this shall not be unto thee. *Peter*, as he thought, did this out of love to Christ, but *Peter* was all this while under a temptation. What had become of us, if Christ had hearkened to *Peter*, and had not suffered? So, when Christ washed his *disciples feet*, *Peter* was so mannerly that he would not let Christ wash his feet, John xiii. 8. *Thou shalt never wash my feet*. This *Peter* did (as he thought) out of love and respect to Christ: *Peter* thought Christ was too good to wash his feet, and therefore would have put Christ off; but this was a temptation, the devil put *Peter* upon this sinful modesty; he struck at *Peter's* salvation, insomuch that Christ saith, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*. So again, when the *Samaritans* would not receive Christ, the disciples, *James* and *John*, said Lord, *wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to consume them*? Luke ix. 54. They did this, as they thought out of love to Christ; they would wish for fire to consume his enemies: but they were under a temptation; it was not zeal, but the wild-fire of their own passion; *ye know not* (saith Christ) *what spirits ye are of*.

*Fourthly*, Satan tempts to that sin which a man's heart is naturally *most inclinable to*; he will



will not tempt a civil man to *gross* sin, this is abhorring to the light of nature; Satan never sets a dish before men that they do not love: but he will tempt a civil man to *pride*, and to trust in his own righteousness, and to make a Saviour of his civility. The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels; the civil man would weave a web of salvation out of his own righteousness. See then in what danger we are, when Satan is continually lying in ambush with his temptations.

*Inf. 2.* See man's inability of himself to resist a temptation. Could he stand of himself against a temptation, this prayer were needless, *Lead us not into temptation*: no man hath power of himself to resist a temptation, further than God gives him strength, *Jer. x. 23. O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself.* If Peter who had *true grace*, and Adam who had *perfect grace*, could not stand against temptation, much less can any stand by the power of nature; which confutes the doctrine of *free-will*: what freedom of will hath man, when he cannot resist the least temptation?

*Inf. 3.* Here is matter of humiliation, that there is in us such an aptitude and proneness to yield to temptation---*Nitimur in vetitum*---We are as ready to swallow a temptation, as the fish to swallow the bait. If the devil tempt to pride, lust, envy, revenge; how do we symbolize with Satan, and embrace his snares? Like a woman that hath a suitor come to her, and she doth not need much wooing, she presently gives her consent: Satan comes a-wooing by temptation, and we soon yield; he strikes fire, and we are as dry tinder that catcheth the first spark; he knocks by temptation, and it is sad to think how soon we open the door to the devil, which is as if one should open the door to a thief; this may cause a spring of tears.

*Inf. 4.* See hence, a Christian's life is no easy life; it is military; he hath a *Goliath* in the field to encounter with, one that is armed with power and subtilty; he hath his wiles and darts. A Christian must be continually watching and fighting; Satan's designs carry death in the front, *1 Pet. v. 8. Seeking whom he may devour*; therefore we had need be always with our weapons in our hand. How few think their life a warfare? Though they have an enemy in the field, that is always laying of snares, or shooting of darts, yet they do not stand sentinel, or get their spiritual artillery

ready; they put on their *jewels*, but not their *armour*, *Job. xxi. 12. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ, as if they were rather in music than in battle.* Many are asleep in sloth when they should be fighting against Satan; and no wonder the devil shoots them when he finds them asleep.

*Use 2.* It reproves them who pray, *Lead us not into temptation*: yet run themselves into temptation: such are they who go to plays and masquerades, and hunt after strange flesh. Some go a slower pace to hell, but such as run themselves into temptation, these go galloping thither: we have too many of these in this debauched age, who, as if they thought they could not sin fast enough, tempt the devil to tempt them.

*Use 3. Exhortation.* Let us labour that we be not overcome by temptation.

*Qu. What means may be used, that Satan's temptations may not prevail against us?*

*Ans. 1. Avoid solitariness.* It is no wisdom in fighting with an enemy to give him the advantage of the ground: we give Satan advantage of the ground when we are alone. *Eve* was foiled in the absence of her husband. A virgin is not so soon set upon in company, *Eccl. iv. 10. Two are better than one.* Get into the communion of saints, and that is a good remedy against temptation.

2. If you would not be overcome of temptation, beware of the *predominancy of melancholy*; this is *atra bilis*, a black humour seated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy disturbs reason, and exposeth to temptation. One calls melancholy, *balneum diaboli*, the devil's bath; he bathes himself with delight in such a person. Melancholy clothes the mind in sable, it fills it with such dismal apprehensions, as oft end in self-murder.

3. If you would not be overcome of temptation, study *sobriety*, *1 Pet. v. 8. Be sober, because your adversary walketh about.* Sober-mindedness consists in the moderate use of earthly things: an immoderate desire of these things oft brings men into the snare of the devil, *1 Tim. vi. 9. They that will be rich fall into a snare.* He who loves riches inordinately, will purchase them unjustly. *Ahab* would swim to *Naboth's* vineyard in blood. He who is drunk with the love of the world, is never free from temptation; he will pull down his soul to build up an estate. *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis auri sacra fames?*-----Be sober, take heed of being

being drunk with the love of the world, lest ye fall into temptation.

4. Be always upon your guard, watch against Satan's wiles and subtilties, 1 Pet. v. 8. *Be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about.* A christian must *excubias agere*, keep watch and ward: see where Satan labours to make a breach, see what grace he most strikes at, or what sin he most tempts to, *Mark xiii. 37. I say unto you all, watch.* Watch all the senses, the eye, the ear, the touch; Satan can creep in here: O how needful is the spiritual watch! Shall Satan be watchful and we drowsy? Doth he watch to devour us, and shall not we watch to save ourselves? Let us see what sin our heart most naturally inclines to, and watch against this.

5. Beware of idleness; Satan sows most of his seed in fallow-ground. It was *Hierom's* counsel to his friend, to be ever busied, that, if the devil did come, he might find him working in the vineyard. Idleness tempts the devil to tempt: the bird that sits still is shot; he that wants employment, never wants temptation; when a man hath nothing to do, Satan will bring grist to the mill, and find him work enough.

6. Make known thy case to some godly friend: the hiding a serpent in the bosom, is not the way to be safe; when the old serpent hath gotten into your bosom by a temptation, do not hide him there by keeping his counsel. If a spark be got into the thatch, it is not wisdom to conceal it, it may set the house on fire; conceal not temptation. The keeping of secrets is for familiar friends: be not so great a friend to Satan, as to keep his secrets; reveal your temptations, which is the way to procure others prayers and advice, let all see that you are not true to Satan's party, because you tell all his plots, and reveal his treasons. Besides, the case to some experienced christian, is the way to have ease; as the opening a vein gives ease, so the opening our case to a friend gives ease to the soul, and a temptation doth not so much inflame.

7. Make use of the word. This the apostle calls the *sword of the spirit*, Ep. .vi. 17. a fit weapon to fight against the tempter. This *sword of the spirit* is *gladius anceps*, a two-edged sword; it wounds carnal lust, and it wounds Satan. He who travels a road where there is robbing, will be sure to ride with his

sword; we are travelling to heaven, and in this road there is a thief will always beset us, Satan is in every place where we go; he meets us at church, he doth not miss a sermon, he will be tempting us there; sometimes to *drowsiness*; when you sleep at a sermon, the devil rocks you asleep; sometimes he tempts by distracting the mind in hearing, sometimes he tempts to question the truth of what you hear; thus we meet with the tempter at church. And he tempts in the shop, he tempts you to use collusion and deceit, *Hos. xii. 7. The balances of deceit are in his hand*, so that we meet with the tempter every where; therefore, this thief being in the road, we had need ride with a sword; we must have the *sword of the spirit* about us. We must have skill to use this sword, and have an heart to draw it out, and this sword will put the devil to flight. Thus our blessed Saviour, when Satan tempted him to distrust and blasphemy, he used a scripture-weapon, *It is written*. Three times Christ wounded the old serpent with his sword. Christ could with his power and authority have rebuked the prince of the air, as he did the winds; but he stops the devil's mouth with scripture, *It is written*. It is not our vows and resolutions will do it, it is not the papists holy water or charms will drive away the devil, but let us bring the word of God against him; this is such an argument as he cannot answer. It was a saying of *Luther*, *I have had great troubles of mind, but so soon as I laid hold on any place of scripture and stay'd myself upon it, as upon my chief anchor, straightway my temptation vanished away.* There's no temptation but we have a fit scripture to answer it. If Satan tempts to sabbath-breaking, answer him, *It is written. Remember to keep the sabbath-day holy.* If he tempts to uncleanness, answer him. *It is written, whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* If he tempts to carnal fear, say, *It is written, fear not them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.* No such way to confute temptation as by scripture; the arrows which we shoot against Satan must be fetched out of this quiver. Many people want this sword of the spirit, they have not a bible; others seldom make use of this sword, but let it rust; they look seldom into the scripture, therefore no wonder they are overcome by temptations. He who is well skill'd in the word, is like one who hath a plaister ready, to lay upon the wound as soon



as it is made, and so the danger is prevented. Oh study the scripture, and you will be too hard for the devil; he cannot stand against this.

8. Let us be careful of our *own hearts*, that they do not decoy us into sin. The apostle saith, *a man is drawn away of his own heart, and inticed*, James i. 14. *Quisque sibi Satan est*, Bern. Every man hath a tempter in his *own bosom*. A traitor within the castle is dangerous. The heart can bring forth a temptation, though Satan do not midwife it into the world: if Satan were dead and buried, the heart could draw us to evil. As the ground of all diseases lies in the humours of the body; so the seed of all sin lies in the original lust. Look to your hearts.

9. If you would not be overcome of temptation, flee the *occasion of sin*. Occasions of sin have a *great force* in them to awaken lust within. He that would keep himself free from infection, will not come near an infected house, if you would be sober, avoid drunken company. *Joseph*, when he was enticed by his mistress, shunned the occasion; the text saith, *he could not be with her*, Gen. xxxix. 10. If you would not be ensnared with popery, do not hear the mass. The *Nazarite*, who was forbid wine, might not eat grapes, which might occasion intemperance. Come not near the borders of a temptation. Suppose one had a body made of gun-powder, he would not come near the least spark of fire, lest he should be blown up: many pray, *lead us not into temptation*, and they run themselves into temptation.

10. If you would not be overcome by temptation, make use of faith, *above all things take the shield of faith*, Eph. vi. 16. Faith wards off Satan's fiery darts, that they do not hurt, 1 Pet. v. 9. *Whom resist, steadfast in the faith*. Mariners in a storm flee to their anchor: flee to your anchor of faith: faith brings Christ along with it, duellers bring their second with them into the field: faith brings Christ along for its second. Faith puts us into Christ, and then the devil cannot hurt us. The *chicken* is safe from the birds of prey, under the wings of the hen; and we are secure from the tempter, under the wings of the Lord Jesus. Though other graces are of use to resist the impulsions of Satan, yet faith is the *conquering grace*: faith takes hold of Christ's merits, value and virtue; and so a Christian is too hard for the devil. The stars vanish when the sun appears: Satan vanissheth when faith appears.

11. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be much in prayer. Such as walk in infectious places, carry antidotes about them; prayer is the best antidote against temptation. When the apostle had exhorted *to put on the whole armour of God*, Eph. vi. 11. he adds v. 18. *Praying with all prayer*. Without this, *reliqua arma parum profunt*, Zanchy. All other weapons will do little good. Christ prescribes this remedy, *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation*, Mark xiv. 38. A christian fetcheth down strength from heaven by prayer. Let us cry to God for help against the tempter, as *Samson* cried to heaven for help, *Judg. xvi. 28*. *O Lord God, remember me and strengthen me, I pray thee, that I may be avenged of the Philistines*. And v. 30. *The house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people*.

Prayer is *flagellum diaboli*, it whips and torments the devil: the apostle bids us *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thes. v. 17. It was *Luther's* advice to a lady, when temptation came, to fall upon her knees by prayer. Prayer doth aswage the force of a temptation. Prayer is the best *charm* or *spell* we can use against the devil. Temptation may bruse our heel? but, by prayer, we wound the serpent's head. When *Paul* had a *messenger of Satan* to buffet him, what remedy doth he use? He betook himself to prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me*. When Satan assaults furiously, let us pray fervently.

12. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be humble *in your own eyes*: such are nearest falling, who presume of their own strength. *Penelton*, who said, his fat flesh should melt in the fire; instead of his fat melting, his heart melted, and he turned from the truth. When men grow into big conceit, God lets them fall, to prick the bladder of pride. O be humble! such are like to hold best out in temptation, who have most grace; but God gives more grace to the humble, *James iv. 6*. Beware of pride; an imposthume is not more dangerous in the body, than pride in the soul. The doves (saith *Pliny*) take a pride in their feathers, and in their flying high; at last they fly so high, that they are a prey to the hawk: when men fly high in pride and self-confidence, they become a prey to the tempter.

13. If you would not be foiled by temptation, do not enter into a dispute with *Satan*. When *Eve* began to argue the case with the serpent

serpent; the serpent was too hard for her; the devil, by his logic, disputed her out of paradise: *Satan* can mince sin, make it small, and varnish it over, and make it look like virtue; *Satan* is too subtil a sophister to hold an argument with him. Dispute not, but fight. If you enter into a parley with *Satan*, you give him half the victory.

14. If we would not be overcome of *Satan*, let us put on christian fortitude. An enemy we must expect who is either shooting of darts, or laying of snares, therefore let us be armed with courage, 2 *Chron.* xix. 11. *Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.* The coward never won victory; and, to animate us in our combat with *Satan*. (1.) We have a good captain that marcheth before us, *Christ* is called the captain of our salvation, *Heb.* ii. 10. (2.) We have good armour: grace is armour of God's making, *Eph.* vi. 11. (3.) *Satan* is beaten in part already; *Christ* hath given him his death-wound upon the cross, *Col.* iii. 15. (4.) *Satan* is a chained enemy, his power is limited; he cannot force the will: it was all *Eve* complained of, that the serpent deceived her, not constrained her, *Gen.* iii. 13. *Satan* hath *austutiam suadendi*, not *potentiam cogendi*; he may persuade, not compel. (5.) He is a cursed enemy, and God's curse will blast him: therefore put on holy gallantry of spirit and magnanimity. Fear not *Satan*. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is against you.

15. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us call in the help of others. If an house be set on fire, would not you call in help? *Satan* tempts, that he may rob you of your soul; acquaint some friends with your case, and beg for their counsel and prayers. Who knows but *Satan* may be cast out by the joint prayers of others? In case of temptation, how exceeding helpful is the communion of saints?

16. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us make use of all the encouragements, we can. If *Satan* be a roaring lion, *Christ* is the lion of the tribe of Judah; If *Satan* tempts, *Christ* prays; if *Satan* be a serpent to sting, *Christ* is a brazen serpent to heal; if the conflict be hard, look to the crown, *James* i. 12. Whilst we are fighting, *Christ* will succour us; and when we overcome he will crown us. What makes the soldier endure a bloody fight, but the hope of a golden harvest? Think, that shortly God will call us out of the field

where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and he will set a garland of glory upon our head. How will the case be altered? Instead of fighting, singing; instead of an helmet, a diadem; instead of a sword, a palm-branch of victory; instead of armour, white robes; instead of *Satan's* skirmishes, the kisses and embraces of a Saviour, the viewing these eternal recompences, would keep us from yielding to temptation. What would, to gratify a lust, lose a crown?

Use 4. A word of counsel to such as are tempted; be so wise as to make good use of your temptations. As we should labour to improve our affliction, so to improve our temptations. We should pick some good out of temptation, as *Samson* got honey out of the lion.

Qu. What good comes out of a temptation? Can there be any good by being set upon by an enemy? Can there be any good to have fiery darts shot at us? Yes, God that can make a treacle of poison, can make his people get much good by their temptations. First, hereby a christian sees that corruption in his heart, which he never saw before. Water in a glass looks pure, but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up; so in temptation a christian sees that steam of sin boil up, that passion and distrust of God, as he thought had not been in his heart. Secondly, hereby a christian sees more of the wiles of *Satan*, and is better able to withstand them; *St. Paul* had been in the fencing-school of temptation, and he grew expert in finding out *Satan's* stratagems, 2 *Cor.* ii. 11. We are not ignorant of his devices. Thirdly, hereby a christian grows more humble; God will rather let his children fall in the devil's hand, than be proud: temptation makes the plumes of pride fall, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7. Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh. Better 'tis that temptation that humbles, than that duty which makes one proud. Thus you see how much good a christian may get by temptation; which made *Luther* say, three things make a good divine, prayer, meditation, temptation.

Use 5. To such as have been under sore temptations and buffetings of *Satan*, to lust, revenge, self-murder, but God hath stood by them, and given them strength to overcome the tempter.

1. Be very thankful to God; say as, 1 *Cor.* xv. 57. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory. Be much in doxology. Why are we kept more than others from falling into sin? We



it because temptation was not so strong? No, Satan shoots his darts with all his force. Was the cause in our will? No, such a broken shield would never have conquered Satan's temptations; know, that it was free-grace that beat back the tempter, and brought us off with trophies of victory. O be thankful to God: had you been overcome by temptation, you might have put black spots in the face of religion, and given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme, 2 Sam. xii. 14. Had you been overcome you might have lain sick of a *wounded spirit*, and cried out with *David of broken bones*. After *David* yielded to temptation, he lay for three quarters of a year in horror of mind; and some divines think, he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. O therefore, what cause have they to stand upon mount *Gerizim* blessing of God, who in a field of battle, have got the better of Satan, and been more than conquerors! Say, as the Psalmist; *Pf. cxxiv. 6. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth*: so blessed be God who hath not given us as a prey to Satan that roaring lion. When God puts mercy in the premisses, we must put praise in the conclusion.

2. You that have been tempted, and come off victors, be full of *sympathy*, pity tempted souls; shew your *pity* in your *pity*. Do you see Satan's darts sticking in their sides? Do what you can to pull out these darts; communicate your experiences to them; tell them how you broke the devil's snare, and your Saviour was your succourer.-----The apostle speaks of restoring others in the *spirit of meekness*, Gal. i. 16. The *Greek word for restore*, alludes to chirurgeions, who set bones out of joint; so, when we see such as are tempted, and Satan hath, as it were, put their bones out of joint, labour to put them in joint again, with all love, meekness and compassion. A word spoken in season may relieve a soul fainting in temptation; and you may do, as the good Samaritan, drop in oil and wine into the wound, Luke x. 34. *Vir spiritualis consilia magis quam convitia meditatur*, Aug.

3. You that have got a conquest of Satan, be not secure. Think not that you shall never be troubled with the tempter more: he is not like the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 23. *The hands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel*. A cock, if he be made once to run away, he will fight no more: but, it is not so with Satan, he is a *restless enemy*; and if you have beaten him

back, he will make a fresh onset. *Hannibal* said of *Marcellus*, a Roman captain, that whether he did beat, or was beaten, he was never quiet.

When *Christ* had worsted Satan, he went away from Christ, but *ad tempus*, for a season, Luke iv. 13. as if he meant to come again. When we have gotten the better of Satan, we are apt to grow secure, to lay aside our armour, and leave off our watch; which, when Satan perceives, then he comes upon us with a new temptation and wounds us: he deals with us as *David* did with the *Amalekites*, when they had taken the spoil, and were secure, 1 Sam. xxx. 16. *They were spread upon the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing*: then, v. 17. *David smote them, and there escaped not a man of them*. Therefore, after we have got the better of the tempter, we must do as the mariners in a calm, mend our tackling, as not knowing how soon another storm may come. Satan may for a time retreat, that he may afterwards come on more fiercely; he may go away a while, and bring seven other spirits with him, Luke xi. 26.

Therefore, be not secure, but stand upon your watch-tower; ly in your armour, always expect a fight. Say, as he that hath a short respite from an ague, I look every day when my fit should come; so say, I look every day when the tempter should come; I will put myself into a warlike posture. Satan, when he is beaten out of the field, is not beaten out of the heart, he will come again. He had little hope to prevail against Christ: *Christ gave him three deadly wounds*, and made him retreat; yet he departed only for a season. If the devil cannot conquer us, yet he knows he shall molest us; if he cannot destroy us, he will surely disturb us; therefore we must, with the pilot, have our compass ready, and be able to turn our needle to any point where temptation shall blow. If the tempter come not so soon as we expect, yet, by putting ourselves into a posture, we have this advantage, we are always prepared.

To conclude all; let us oft make this prayer, *Lead us not into temptation*. If Satan woos us by a temptation, let us not consent. But in case a christian hath, through weakness (and not out of design) yielded to a temptation, yet let him not cast away his anchor: take heed of despair, this is worse than the fall itself.

Christian, steep thy soul in the brinish waters of

of repentance, and God will be appeased. Repentance gives the soul a vomit: Christ loved *Peter* after his denial of him, and sent the first news of his resurrection to him; *Go tell the disciples and Peter.* It is an error to think that one act of sin can destroy the *habit of grace*: It is a wrong to God's mercy, and a christian's

comfort, to make this despairing conclusion, that after one bath fallen by temptation, his estate is irrecoverable. Therefore, Christian, if thou hast fallen with *Peter*, repent with *Peter*, and God will be ready to seal thy pardon.

MATTH. vi. 13. *But deliver us from evil.*

THE second branch of this sixth petition is, *libera nos a malo; Deliver us from evil.* There is more in this petition than is expressed; the thing expressed is, that we may be kept from evil; the thing further intended is, that we may make a progress in piety, *Titus* ii. 11. *Denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts*; there is being delivered from evil: *that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly*; there is a progress in piety.

I begin with the first thing in this petition expressed, *Deliver us from evil.*

Qu. *What evil do we pray to be delivered from?*

Ans. 1. In general, from the evil of sin.

2. More particularly, we pray to be delivered,

(1.) From the evil of our own heart, it is called an *evil heart*, *Heb.* iii. 12.

(2.) From the evil of Satan; he is called, the *evil one*, *Mat.* xiii. 19.

(3.) From the evil of the world; it is called the present *evil world*, *Gal.* i. 4.

First, In general, *Deliver us from evil*: we pray to be delivered from the evil of sin. Not that we pray to be delivered immediately from the *presence* and *in-being* of sin, for that cannot be in this life; we cannot shake off this viper; but we pray, that God will deliver us more and more from the power and practice, from the scandalous acts of sin, which cast a reflection upon the gospel.

Sin then is the deadly evil we pray against; *Deliver us from evil*: with what pencil shall I be able to draw the deformed face of sin? The devil would baptize sin with the name of virtue: it is easy to lay fair colours on a black face.

But I shall endeavour to shew you what a prodigious monster sin is; and there is great reason we should pray, *Deliver us from evil.*

Sin is (as the apostle saith) *exceeding sinful*, *Rom.* vii. 13. Sin is the very spirits of mischief distilled; it is called *the accursed thing*, *Joh.* vii. 13. That sin is the most execrable evil, appears several ways;

1. Look upon sin in its original.
2. Look upon sin in its nature.
3. Look upon sin in the judgment and opinion of the godly.
4. Look upon sin in the comparative.
5. Look upon sin in the manner of cure.
6. Look upon sin in its direful effects; and

when you have seen all these, you will apprehend what an horrid evil sin is, and what great reason we have to pray, *Deliver us from evil.*

1<sup>st</sup>. Look upon sin in its original; it fetcheth its pedigree from hell. Sin is of the devil, *John* viii. 44. Sin calls the devil father. It is *serpentis venenum*, as *Austin* saith, it is the poison the old serpent hath spit into our virgin nature.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Look upon sin in its nature, and so it is evil. (1.) See what the scripture compares it to. Sin hath got a bad name, it is compared to the vomit of dogs, 2 *Pet.* ii. 22. to a monstrous cloth, *Isa.* xxx 22. which, as *Jerom* saith, was the most unclean thing under the law: it is compared to the plague, 1 *Kings* viii. 38. to a gangrene, 2 *Tim.* ii. 17. Persons under these diseases we would be loth to eat and drink with.

(2.) Sin is evil in its nature, as it is *injurious* to God three ways;

1. It is a breach of God's royal law, 1 *John* iii. 4. *Sin is a transgression of the law*: It is *crimen laesae majestatis*, high treason against heaven. What greater injury can be offered to a prince, than to trample upon his royal edicts? *Neh.* ix. 16. *They have cast thy laws behind their backs.*

2. Sin is a contumacious affront to God, it



is a walking contrary to him, *Lev. xxvi. 40.* the Hebrew word for sin signifies *rebellion*: sin flies in the face of God *Job xv. 25.* He stretcheth out his hand against God. We ought not to lift up a thought against God, much less to lift up an hand against him; but the sinner doth so. Sin is *Deicidium*; it would not only unthrone God, but un-god him: if sin could help it, God should be no longer God.

3. Sin is injurious to God, as it is an act of high ingratitude. God feeds a sinner, screens off many evils from him; yet he not only forgets God's mercies, but abuseth them, *Hos. ii. 8.* I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver, which they prepared for Baal. God may say, I gave thee wit, health, riches, which thou hast employed against me. A sinner makes an arrow of God's mercies, and shoots at him, *2 Sam. xvi. 17.* Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Did God give thee life to sin? Did he give thee wages to serve the devil? O what an ungrateful thing is sin! Ingratitude forfeits mercy, as the merchant doth his goods by not paying custom.

(3.) Sin is evil in its nature, as it is a foolish thing, *Luke xii. 20.* Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, *1 Sam. xiii. 13.* Is it not foolish to prefer a short life before an inheritance? A sinner prefers the pleasures of sin for a season, before those pleasures which run at God's right-hand for evermore. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? Sin gratifies Satan. *Mortalium errores cupulae sunt daemones*, men's sins feast the devil. Is it not folly for a man to be *sepo de se*, guilty of his own destruction, to give himself poison? A sinner hath an hand in his own death, *Prov. i. 18.* They lay wait for their own blood; no creature did ever willingly kill himself but man.

(4.) Sin is a polluting thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution; it is as rust to gold, as a stain to beauty; it is called *filthiness of flesh and spirit*, *2 Cor. vii. 1.* It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. *Quanta sorditas vitiosae mentis!* Cicero. This filth of sin is inward: a spot in the face may easily be wiped off, but to have the liver and lungs tainted is far worse; sin hath got into the conscience, *Tit. i. 15.* Sin defiles all the faculties, the mind, memory, affections, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted; sin pollutes and fly-blows our holy things; the leper, in the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had pol-

luted the altar; an emblem of sins leprosy spotting our holy things.

(5.) Sin is a debasing thing, it degrades us of our honour, *Dan. xi. 25.* In those days shall stand up a vile person. This was spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a king, and his name signifies illustrious; but sin had made him vile. Sin blots a man's name: nothing so turns a man's glory into shame as sin doth; sin makes one like a beast, *Psal. xlix. 20.* it is worse to be like a beast, than to be a beast; it is no shame to be a beast, it is a shame for a man to be like a beast. Lust makes a man brutish, and wrath makes him devilish.

(6.) Sin is an enslaving thing. A sinner is a slave when he sins most freely. *Grave servitutis jugum*, Cicero. Sin makes man the devil's servants: Satan bids them sin, and they do it; he bid Judas betray Christ, and he did it; he bid Ananias tell a lie, and he did it, *Acts v. 3.* When a man commits sin, he is the devil's lackey, and runs on his errand; they who serve Satan, have such a bad master, that they will be afraid to receive their wages.

(7.) Sin is an unfavoury thing, *Psal. xiv. 3.* They are altogether become filthy; in the Heb. they are become stinking! Sin is very noisom to God: that person who shall worship in God's house, yet live in the sin of uncleanness, let him be perfumed with all the spices of Arabia, his prayers are unfavoury, *Isa. i. 13.* Incense is an abomination to me; therefore God is said to behold the proud afar off, *Psal. cxxxviii. 6.* He will not come near the dung-hill-sinner, that hath such noisom vapours coming from him.

(8.) Sin is a painful thing, it costs men much labour and pains to accomplish their wicked designs, *Jer. ix. 5.* They weary themselves to commit iniquity. *Peccatum est sui ipsius poena.* What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason? He goes to the high priest, and then after to the band of soldiers, and then back again to the garden. What pains did the powder-traitors take in digging through a thick stone-wall? What pains in laying their barrels of powder, and then cover them with crow's of iron? How did they tire out themselves in sin's drudgery? Chrysostom saith, virtue is easier than vice: It is easier to be sober than intemperate: it is easier to serve God than to follow sin. A wicked man sweats

sweats at the devil's plough, and is at great pains to damn himself.

(9.) Sin is a disturbing thing; whatever defiles, disturbs. Sin breaks the peace of the soul, *Isa. lvii. 21. No peace to the wicked.* When a man sins presumptuously, he stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will ly very uneasy when he comes to die. Sin causeth a *trembling at the heart.* When *Spira* had sinned, he had a hell in his conscience; he was in that horror, that he professed he envied *Cain* and *Judas*. *Charles IX.* who was guilty of the massacre in *Paris*, was afterwards a *terror to himself*; he was frighted at every noise, and could not endure to be awak-ed out of his sleep without music. Sin breaks the peace of the soul. *Cain*, in killing *Abel*, stabbed half the world at a blow, but could not kill the worm of his own conscience. Thus you see what an evil sin is in the nature of it; and had we not need pray, *Deliver us from evil?*

3dly, Look upon sin in the judgment and opinion of the godly, and it will appear to be the most prodigious evil.

1. Sin is so great an evil, that the godly will rather do any thing than sin, *Heb. xi. 24. Moses chose rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.* The primitive Christians said, *ad leonem potius quam leonem*, they chose rather to be devoured by lions without, than lusts within. *Irenaeus* was carried to a place, where was a cross on this side, and an idol on the other, and he was put to his choice, either to bow to the idol, or suffer on the cross, and he chose the latter. A wise man will chose rather to have a rent in his coat than in his flesh: the godly will rather endure outward sufferings than a rent in their conscience. So great an evil is in sin, that the godly will not sin for the greatest gain; they will not sin though they might purchase an estate by it, nay though they were sure to promote God's glory by it.

2. The godly testify sin is a great evil, in that they desire to die upon no account more than this, that they may be rid of sin; they are desirous to put off the clothing of the flesh, that they may be unclothed of sin: it is their greatest grief that they are troubled with such inmates; they have the stirrings of pride, lust, envy. It was a cruel torment *Mezentius* used, he tied a dead man to a living: thus a child of God hath corruption joined with grace;

here is a dead man tied to the living. So hateful is this, that a believer desires to die for no other reason more than this, that death shall free him from sin. Sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world. Thus you see, in the opinion of the godly, sin is the most hyperbolical and execrable evil.

4thly, look upon sin in the comparative, and it will appear to be the most deadly evil. Compare what you will with it; 1. Afflictions, 2. Death, 3. Hell, and still sin is worse.

First, compare sin with affliction: there is more evil in a drop of sin, than in a sea of affliction.

1. Sin is the cause of affliction, the cause is more than the effect. Sin brings all mischiefs: sin hath sickness, sword, famine, and all judgments in the womb of it. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, wastes the radical moisture. As the poets feign of *Pandora's* box, when it was opened, it filled the world full of diseases: when *Adam* broke the box of original righteousness, it hath caused all the penal evils in the world. Sin is the *Phaeton* that sets the world on fire. Sin turned the angels out of heaven, and *Adam* out of paradise. Sin causeth mutinies, divisions, massacres, *Jer. xlviii. 6. O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be e're thou be quiet?* The sword of God's justice lies quietly in the scabbard, till sin draws it out and whets it against a nation. So that sin is worse than affliction, it being the cause of it: the cause is more than the effect.

2. God is the author of affliction, *Amos iii. 6. Is there any evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?* It is meant of the evil of affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but no hand in sin: God is the cause of every action, so far as it is natural, but not as it is sinful. He who makes an instrument of iron, is not the cause of the rust and canker which corrupts the iron; so God made the instrument of our souls, but the rust and canker of sin, which corrupts our souls, God never made. *Peccatum Deus non fecit*, *Austin.* God can no more act evil, than the sun can darken. In this sense sin is worse than affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but disclaims having any hand in sin.

3. Affliction doth but reach the body, and make that miserable; but sin makes the soul miserable. The soul is the most noble part. The soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay;



it is excellent in its essence, a spiritual, immortal substance; excellent in the price paid for it, redeemed with the blood of God, *Acts* xx. 28. It is more worth than a world; the world is of a coarser make, the soul of a sinner spinning; in the world we see the finger of God, in the soul the image of God. To have the precious soul endangered, is far worse than to have the body endangered. Sin wrongs the soul, *Prov.* viii. 36. Sin casts this jewel of the soul overboard. Affliction is but skin-deep, it can but take away the life, but sin takes away the soul, *Luke* xii. 20. The loss of the soul is an unparalleled loss, it can never be made up again. God (saith St. Chrysostom) hath given thee two eyes, if thou losest one, thou hast another; but thou hast but one soul, and, if that be lost, it can never be repaired. Thus sin is worse than affliction; the one can but reach the body, the other ruins the soul. Is there not great reason then, that we should often put up this petition, *deliver us from evil*?

4. Afflictions are good for us, *Pf.* cxix. 71. *It was good for me that I was afflicted.* Many can bless God for affliction. Affliction humbles, *Lam.* iii. 19. *Remembering my affliction, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.* Afflictions are compared to thorns, *Hes.* ii. 8. these thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Affliction is the school of repentance, *Jer.* xxxi. 18. *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; I repented.* The fire being put under the still, makes the water drop from the roses: the fire of affliction makes the water of repentance drop from the eyes. Affliction brings us nearer to God. The loadstone of mercy doth not draw us so near to God as the cords of affliction. When the prodigal was pinched with want, then saith he, *I will arise and go to my father*, *Luke* xv. 18. Afflictions prepare for glory, *2 Cor.* iv. 17. *This light affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory.* The limner lays his gold upon dark colours; so God lays first the dark colours of affliction, and then the golden colour of glory. Thus affliction is for our good; but sin is not for our good, it keeps good things from us, *Jer.* v. 25. *Your sins have withholden good things from you.* Sin stops the current of God's mercy, it precipitates men to ruin. *Manasseh's* affliction brought him to humiliation; but *Judas* his sin brought him to desperation.

5. A man may be afflicted, and his conscience

may be quiet. *Paul's* feet were in the stocks, yet he had the witness of his conscience, *2 Cor.* i. 12. The head may ache, yet the heart may be well: the outward man may be afflicted, yet the soul may dwell at ease, *Pf.* xxv. 13. The hail may beat upon the tiles of the houses, when there is music within; in the midst of outward pain there may be inward peace. Thus, in affliction, conscience may be quiet; but when a man commits a presumptuous, scandalous sin, conscience is troubled: by defiling the purity of conscience, we lose the peace of conscience. When *Spira* had sinned, and abjured the faith, he was a terror to himself, he had an hell in his conscience. *Tiberius* the emperor felt such a sting in his conscience, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily.

6. In affliction we may have the love of God. Afflictions are love-tokens, *Rev.* iii. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke.* Afflictions are sharp arrows, but shot from the hand of a loving father. If a man should throw a bag of money at another, and it should bruise him a little, and raise the skin, he would not be offended, but take it as a fruit of Love; so, when God bruise us with affliction, it is to enrich us with the golden graces of his spirit, all is love: but when we commit sin, God withdraws his love; it is the sun overcast with a cloud, nothing appears but anger and displeasure. When *David* had sinned in the matter of *Uriah*, *2 Sam.* xi. 27. the thing that *David* had done displeased the Lord.

7. There are many encouragements to suffer affliction. God himself suffers with us, *Isa.* lxii. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted.* God will strengthen us in our sufferings, *Pf.* xxxvii. 39. *He is their strength in the time of trouble.* Either God makes our burden lighter, or our faith stronger. He will compensate and recompense our sufferings, *Mat.* xix. 29. *Every one that hath forsaken houses or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and inherit life everlasting.* Here are encouragements to suffer affliction, but there is no encouragement to sin; God hath brandished a flaming sword of threatnings to deter us from sin, *Pf.* lxxviii. 21. *God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.* There is a flying roll of curses which enters into the house of a sinner, *Zeck.* v. 4. *If a man sin, be it at his peril*, *Deut.* xxxii. 42. *I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.* God will make men weary of their sins, or he will make them weary

weary of their lives. Thus sin is worse than affliction: there are encouragements to suffer affliction, but no encouragement to sin.

8. When a person is afflicted, only he himself suffers; but by sinning openly he doth hurt to others. (1.) He doth hurt to the unconverted; one man's sin may lay a stone in another man's way, at which he may stumble and fall into hell; O the evil of scandalous sin! Some are discouraged, others hardened; thy sinning may be a cause of another's damning, *Mal. ii. 7, 8.* The priests going wrong caused others to stumble. (2.) He doth hurt to the converted; by an open scandalous sin he offends weak believers, and so sins against Christ, *1 Cor. viii. 12.* Thus sin is worse than affliction, because it doth hurt to others.

9. In affliction the saints may rejoice, *1 Thes. i. 6. Ye received the word in much affliction with joy. Heb. x. 34. Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.* Aristotle speaks of a bird that lives among thorns, yet sings sweetly; so a child of God can rejoice in afflictions. St. Paul had his prison-songs, *Rom. v. 3. we glory in tribulation.* The Greek word signifies an exuberancy of joy, a joy with boasting and triumph. God doth oft pour in these divine consolations as cause the saints to rejoice in afflictions; they had rather have their afflictions, than want their comforts; God doth not candy their wormwood with sugar, *Rom. v. 5.* You have seen the sun shine when it rains; the saints have had the shinings of God's face, when afflictions have rained and dropped upon them. Thus we may rejoice in affliction, but we cannot rejoice in sin, *Hos. ix. 1. Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as other people, for thou hast gone a-whoring from thy God.* Sin is matter of shame and grief, not of joy. David having sinned in numbring of the people, his heart smote him, *2 Sam. xxiv. 10.* As the pricking of a vein lets out the blood; so, when sin hath pricked the conscience it lets out the joy.

10. Affliction is a magnifying of a person, *Job. vii. 17. What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, and visit him every morning?* That is, visit him with affliction.

Qu. How doth afflictions magnify us?

Ans. (1.) As they are signs of sonship, *Heb. xii. 7. If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as sons.* Every print of the rod is a badge of honour. (2.) As the sufferings of the godly have raised their fame and renown in the world; the zeal and constancy of the martyrs in their

sufferings have eternized their name: O how eminent was Job for his patience! *James v.*

11. Ye have heard of the patience of Job. Job the sufferer was more renowned than Alexander the conqueror. Thus afflictions magnify a person; but sin doth not magnify but vilify him. When Eli's sons had sinned and profaned their priest-hood, they turned their glory into shame; the text saith, *They made themselves vile,* *1 Sam. iii. 12.* Sin casts an indelible blot on a man's name, *Prov. vi. 32, 33. Whoso commits adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.*

11. A man may suffer affliction, and bring honour to religion. Paul's iron chain made the gospel wear a gold chain; suffering credits and propagates the gospel; but committing of sin brings a dishonour and scandal upon the ways of God. Cyprian saith, when in the primitive times a virgin, who vowed herself to religion, had defiled her chastity, *totum ecclesiae erubescere*, shame and grief filled the face of the whole congregation. When scandalous sins are committed by a few, they bring a reproach upon all them that profess; as three or four brass shillings in a sum of money make all the rest suspected.

12. When a man's afflictions are upon a good account, that he suffers for Christ, he hath the prayers of God's people. 'Tis no small privilege to have a stock of prayer going; it is like a merchant that hath a part in several ships; suffering saints have a large share in the prayers of others, *Acts xii. 5. Peter was in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God for him.* What greater happiness than to have God's promises, and the saints prayers? but when a man sins presumptuously and scandalously, he hath the saints bitter tears, and just censures; he is a burden to all that know him, as David speaks in another case, *Pf. xxxi. 11. They that did see me without, fled from me.* So a scandalous sinner, the people of God flee from him, he is like an infected person, every one shuns and avoids him.

13. Affliction can hurt a man only while he is living, but sin doth hurt when he is dead. As a man's virtues and alms may do good when he is dead, so a man's sins may do him mischief when he is dead. When a spider is killed, the poison of it may do hurt; so the poison of an evil example may do much hurt,

when



when a man is in his grave. Affliction at most can but last a man's life, but sin lives, and doth hurt, when he is gone. Thus you see sin is far worse than affliction.

*Secondly*, Sin is worse than death. *Aristotle* calls death the terrible of terribles, and *Job* calls it the king of terrors, *Job*. xviii. 14. but sin is more deadly than death itself. (1.) Death, though it be painful, yet it were not hurtful but for sin: it is sin that imbitters death, and makes it sting, *1 Cor.* xv. 57. *The sting of death is sin*. Were it not for sin, though death might kill us, it could not curse us. Sin poisons death's arrow, so that sin is worse than death, because it puts a sting into death. (2.) Death doth but separate between the body and the soul: but sin, without repentance, separates between God and the soul, *Judges* xviii. 24. *Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* Death doth but take away our life from us, but sin takes away our God from us; so that sin is worse than death.

*Thirdly*, Sin is worse than hell. In hell there is the worm and the fire, but sin is worse. (1.) Hell is of God's making, but sin is none of his making; it is a monster of the devil's creating.

(2.) The torments of hell are a burden only to the sinner, but sin is a burden to God, *Amos* ii. 13. *I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves*. (3.) In hell torments there is something that is good: there is the execution of God's justice, there is justice in hell; but sin is the most unjust thing; it would rob God of his glory, Christ of his purchase, the soul of its happiness; so that it is worse than hell.

*5thly*, Look upon sin in the manner of its cure; it cost dear to be done away: the guilt of sin could not be removed but by the blood of Christ; he who was God must die, and be made a curse for us, before sin could be remitted. How horrid is sin, that no angel or archangel, nor all the powers of heaven, could procure the pardon of sin, but it cost the blood of God! If a man should commit an offence, and all the nobles should kneel upon their knees before the king for him; but no pardon could be had, unless the king's son be arraigned and suffer death for him; all would conceive it was an horrible fact that must be the cause of this; such is the case here, the Son of God must die to appease God's anger for our sins. O the agonies and sufferings of Christ! (1.) In his body: his head crowned with thorns, his face

spit upon, his side pierced with the spear, his hands and feet nailed,-----*Totum pro vulnere corpus*----- (2.) He suffered in his soul, *Mat.* xxvi. 38. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death*. He drank a bitter cup mingled with curses; which made him, though he was sanctified by the spirit, supported by the Deity, comforted by angels, sweat drops of blood, and cry out upon the cross, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* All this was to do away our sin. View sin in Christ's blood, and it will appear of a crimson colour.

*6thly*. Look upon sin in the dismal effects of it, and it will appear the most horrid prodigious evil, *Rom.* vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death*, that is, the second death, *Rev.* xxi. 8. Sin hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages. A wicked man knows what sin is in the pleasure of it, but doth not know what sin is in the punishment of it. Sin is *Scorpio pungens*, it draws hell at the heels of it. This hellish torment consists of two parts;

1. *Pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, *Mat.* vii. 23. *Depart from me*. It was a great trouble to *Abalom*, that he might not see the king's face: to lose God's smiles, to be banished from his presence in whose presence is fulness of joy, how sad and tremendous! this word *depart*, (*saith Chrysostom*) is worse than the fire. Sure sin must be the greatest evil, which separates us from the greatest good.

2. *Pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, *Mat.* xxv. 41. *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. Why, might sinners plead; Lord, if we must depart from thee, let us have thy blessing; no, Go, ye cursed: but if we must depart from thee, let it be into some place of ease and rest; no, *Go into fire*. But if we must into fire, let it be for a little time; let the fire be quickly put out; no, *Go into everlasting fire*: but if it be so, that we must be there, let us be with good company; no, *with the devil and his angels*. O what an evil is sin! all the torments of this life are but *ludibrium & risus*, a kind of sport to hell torments: what is a burning fever to the burning in hell! it is called *the wrath of the Almighty*, *Rev.* xix. 15. The Almighty God inflicts the punishment, therefore it will be heavy. A child cannot strike very hard, but if a giant strike he kills with a blow: to have the Almighty God to lay on the stroke, it will be intolerable. Hell is the *EMPHASIS* of misery. The body and soul, which have sinned

sinned together, shall suffer together; and these torments shall have *no period* put to them, *Rev. ix. 6. They shall seek death, and shall not find it. Rev. xxiv. 11. And the smoke of their torments ascendeth for ever and ever*: here the wicked thought a prayer long, a *sabbath* long; but how long will it be to ly upon beds of flames for ever? This word, *ever*, breaks the heart: thus you see sin is the most deadly and execrable evil: look upon it in its original, in its nature, in the judgment and estimate of the wise; look upon it comparatively, it is worse than affliction, death, hell; look upon it in the manner of cure, and in the dismal effect, it brings eternal damnation: is there not then a great deal of reason that we should make this prayer, *deliver us from evil*?

*Use 1st. Branch. I.* Is sin such a deadly, pernicious evil, the evil of evils? See then what it is we are to pray most to be delivered from, and that is from sin, our saviour hath taught us to pray, *deliver us from evil*. Hypocrites pray more against temporal evils than spiritual. *Pharaoh* prayed more to have the plague of hail and thunder to be removed, than his hard heart should be removed, *Exod. ix. 28. The Israelites* prayed, *tolle serpentes*, take away the serpents from us, more than to have their sin taken away, *Numb. xxi. 8. The hypocrite's* prayer is *carnal*, he prays more to be cured of his deafness and lameness, than of his unbelief; more that God would take away his pain, than take away his sin. But our prayer should be, *deliver us from evil*. Spiritual prayers are best: hast thou a diseased body? pray more that the disease of thy soul may be removed, than thy body, *Pf. xli. 4. Heal my soul, for I have sinned*. The plague of the heart is worse than a cancer in the breast, hast thou a child that is crooked? Pray more to have its unholiness removed than its crookedness: spiritual prayers are more pleasing to God, and are as music in his ears. Christ hath taught us to pray against sin, *deliver us from evil*.

*II. Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then admire the *wonderful patience* of God that bears with sinners. Sin is a breach of God's royal law, it strikes at his glory; now, for God to bear with sinners, who provoke him, it shows admirable patience; well may he be called, *the God of patience*, *Rom. xv. 4, 5. It would tire the patience of the angels, to bear with mens sins one day; but what doth*

God bear? How many affronts and injuries doth he put up? God sees all the intrigues and horrid impieties committed in a nation, *Jer. xxix. 23. They have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord. God could strike men dead in their sins; but he forbears, and respites them. Methinks I see the justice of God with a flaming sword in his hand, ready to strike the stroke; and patience steps in for the sinner, Lord, spare him a while longer. Methinks I hear the angel saying to God, as the king of Israel to the prophet. 2 Kings vi. 21. Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them? Lord, here is such a sinner, shall I smite him? Shall I take off the head of such a drunkard, swearer, sabbath breaker? And God's patience saith as the dresser of the vineyard, *Luke xiii. 8. Let him alone this year. O the infinite patience of God, that sin being so great an evil, and so contrary to God, he should bear with sinners so long! 1 Sam. xxiv. 29. If a man find his enemy, will he let him go, well away? God finds his enemies, yet he lets them go, he is not presently avenged on them. Every sin hath a voice to cry to God for vengeance; Sodom's sin cried, Gen. xviii. 20. Yet God spares men; but let not sinners presume upon God's patience; if they repent not, long forbearance is no forgiveness; God's patience abused will leave men more inexcusable.**

*III. Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then there is *no sin little*. There's no little treason; every sin strikes at God's crown and dignity: and in his sense it may be said, as *Jeb. viii. 5. Are not thy iniquities infinite?* The least sin (as the schoolmen say) is infinite *objection*, because is committed against an infinite majesty: and besides, nothing can do away sin, but that which hath an *infinity* in it; for though the sufferings of Christ (as man) were not infinite, yet the divine nature did shed forth an infinite value and merit upon his sufferings. So that no sin is little, there is no little hell for sin. As we are not to think any of God's mercies little, because they are more than we can deserve; so neither are we to think any of our sins little, because they are more than we can answer for. That sin we esteem lightest, without Christ's blood, will be heavy enough to sink us into perdition.

*IV. Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then see whence all personal or national corruptions  
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come; they come from the evil of sin; our sin grows high that makes our divisions grow wide; sin is the *Achan* that troubles us, it is the cockatrice egg, out of which comes a fiery flying serpent. Sin is like *Phaeton*, who, as the poets feign, driving the chariot of the sun, set the world on fire. Sin like the planet *Saturn* hath a malignant influence: sin brings us into straits, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 14. David said unto Gad, *I am in a great strait.* Jer. iv. 17. *As keepers of a field are they against her round about:* as horses or deer in a field are so inclosed with hedges, and so narrowly watched, that they cannot get out; so *Jerusalem* was so close besieged with enemies, and watched, that there was no escape for her: Whence was this? v. 18. *This is thy wickedness.* All our evils are from the evil of sin. The cords that pinch us are of our own twisting. *Flagitium & flagellum sunt tanquam acus & filum.* Sin raiseth all the storms in conscience; the sword of God's justice lies quiet till sin draws it out of the scabbard, and makes God whit it against a nation.

V. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then how little reason hath any one to be in love with sin? Some are so infatuated with sin, that they delight in it. The devil can so cook and dress sin, that it pleaseth the sinner's palate, *Job* xx. 12. *Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth.* Sin is as delightful to corrupt nature, as meat to the taste. Sin is a feast on which men feed their lusts; but there's little cause to be so in love with sin, *Job* xx. 14. *Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, it is the gall of asps within him.* To love sin, is to hug an enemy. Sin puts a worm into conscience, a sting into death, a fire into hell. Sin is like those locusts, *Rev.* ix. 7. *On their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and they had tails like scorpions, and they had stings in their tails.* After the woman's hair comes the scorpion's sting.

VI. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then, what may we judge of them who make light of sin, as if there were no danger in it; as if God were not in earnest when he threatens sin; or as if ministers were about a needless work, when they preach against sin? Some people make nothing of breaking a commandment; they make nothing of telling a lie, of cozening, of slandering; nothing of living in the sin of uncleanness; if you weigh sin in the

ballance of some mens judgments, it weighs very light: but, who are those that make so very light of sin? *Solomon* hath described them, *Prov.* xix. 9. *Fools make a mock of sin.* *Stultus in vitia cito dilabitur*, *Isidor.* Who but fools would make light of that which grieves the spirit of God? Who but fools would put such a viperous sin in their bosom? Who but fools would laugh at their own calamity, and make sports while they give themselves poison.

VII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then I infer, that there's no good to be gotten by sin; of this thorn we cannot gather grapes. If sin be so deadly an evil, then we cannot get any profit by it; no man did ever thrive upon this trade: those Atheists said, *Mal.* iii. 14. *It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it?* But we may say more truly, what profit is their in sin? *Rom.* vi. 21. *What fruit had ye in these things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* Where are your earnings? What have you gotten by sin? It hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages. What profit had *Achan* of his wedge of gold? That wedge seemed to cleave asunder his soul from God. What profit had *Ahab* of the vineyard he got unjustly? The dogs licked his blood, 1 *Kings* xxi. 19. What profit had *Judas* of his treason? For thirty pieces he sold his Saviour, and bought his own damnation. All the gain men get by their sins, they may put in their eye; nay, they must, and weep it out again.

VIII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, see then the folly of those who venture upon sin, because of the pleasure they have in it, 2 *Thess.* ii. 12. *Who have pleasure in unrighteousness.* As for the pleasure of sin, (1.) It is but seeming, it is but a pleasant fancy, a golden dream. (2.) And besides, it is a mixed pleasure, it has bitterness intermingled, *Pro.* vii. 17. *I have (saith the harlot) perfumed my bed with myrrhe, aloes and cinnamon.* For one sweet, here are two bitters; cinnamon is sweet, but myrrhe and aloes are bitter; the harlot's pleasure is mixed. There are those inward fears and lashes of conscience, as imbitter the pleasure. 3. If there be any pleasure in sin, it is only to the body, the brutish part; the soul is not at all gratified by the pleasure, *Luke* xii. 19. *Soul, take thy ease;* he might more properly have said, *body, take thy ease;* the soul cannot feed on sensual objects. 4. In short, that pleasure men talk of in sin, is their disease. Some take pleasure in eating chalk or coals, this is from their disease; so,

fo, when men talk of pleasure in eating the forbidden fruit, it is from the sickness and disease of their souls; *they put bitter for sweet*, Isa. v. 20. O what folly is it, for a cup of pleasure, to drink a sea of wrath? Sin will be bitter in the end, *Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. Look not on the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup; at last it bites like a serpent.* Sin will prove like *Ezekiel's* roll; sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly, *mel in ore, fel in corde*. Ask *Cain* now, how he likes his murder? *Achan*, how he likes his golden wedge? O remember that saying of *Austin*, *Momentaneum est quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat*. The pleasure of sin is soon gone, but the sting remains.

**IX. Branch.** If sin be so great an evil, then, what wisdom is it to depart from evil: *Job xxviii. 28. To depart from evil is understanding.* To sin, is to do foolishly: therefore, to depart from sin, is to do wisely. *Solomon* saith, *Prov. xxix. 6. In every transgression is a snare.* Is it not wisdom to avoid a snare? Sin is a deceiver, it cheated our first parents: instead of being as gods, they became as the beasts that perish, *Pf. xlix. 20.* Sin hath cheated all that have meddled with it; is it not wisdom to shun such a cheater? Sin hath many fair pleas, and tells how it will gratify all the senses with pleasure: but, saith a gracious soul, *Christ's* love is sweeter; peace of conscience is sweeter; what are the pleasures of sin to the pleasures of paradise? Well may the saints be called *wise virgins*, because they spy the deceits that are in sin, and avoid the snares. *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.*

**X. Branch.** If sin be so great an evil, then, how justifiable and commendable are all those means which are used to keep men from sin? how justifiable are a minister's admonitions and reproofs? *Tit. i. 13. Rebuke them sharply; cuttingly; cuttingly:* a metaphor from a surgeon that searches a wound, and cuts out the proud flesh, that the patient may be sound; so God's minister comes with a cutting reproof; but it is to keep you from sin, and to save your souls. *Si merita objurgaverit te aliquis, scito quia profuit*, *Senec.* Esteem them your best friends, who would keep you from sinning against God. If a man were going to poison or drown himself, were not he his friend who would hinder him from doing it? All a minister's reproofs are but to keep you from sin, and hinder you from self-murder; *all is in love, 2*

*Cor. v. 11. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.* 'Tis the passion of most to be angry with them that would reclaim them from sin, *Amos v. 10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate.* Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion, seeing it is to purge out the peccant humour? 'Tis mercy to men's souls to tell them of their sins. And surely those are priests for the devil, *2 Cor. xi. 15.* who see men go on in sin, and ready to drop into hell, yet never pull them back by a reproof; nay, perhaps flatter them in their sins. God never made ministers as false glasses, to make bad faces look fair: such make themselves guilty of other men's sins.

**XI. Branch.** If sin be so great an evil, the evil of evils, then see what a bad choice they make, who choose sin to avoid affliction: as if, to save the coat from being rent, one should suffer his flesh to be rent. It was a false charge that *Elihu* brought against *Job*, *ch. xxxvi. 21. Thou hast chosen iniquity rather than affliction.* This is a bad choice. Affliction hath a promise made to it, *2 Sam. xxii. 28.* but sin hath no promise made to it. Affliction is for our good, but sin is not for our good; it would entail hell and damnation upon us. *Spir* chose iniquity rather than affliction, but it cost him dear; he at last repented of his choice. He who commits sin to avoid sufferings, is like one that runs into a lion's den to avoid the stinging of a gnat.

**XII. Branch.** If sin be so great an evil, see then what should be a christian's great care in this life, to keep from sin, *Deliver us from evil.* Some make it all their care to keep out of trouble; they had rather keep their skin whole, than their conscience pure: but our care should be chiefly to keep from sin. How careful are we to forbear such a dish, as the physicians tell us is hurtful for us; it will bring the stone or gout? Much more should we be careful that we eat not the forbidden fruit, which will bring divine vengeance, *1 Tim. v. 22. Keep thyself pure.* It hath always been the study of the saints to keep aloof off from sin, *Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* *Pf. xix. 13. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.* It was a saying of *Anselm*, If sin were on one side, and hell on the other, I would rather leap into hell, than willingly sin against my God. O what a mercy is it to be kept from sin! We count it a great mercy to be



kept from the plague and fire; but what is it to be kept from sin?

XIII. *Branch.* Is sin so great an evil? see then that which may make us long for heaven, when we shall be perfectly freed from sin, not only from the outward acts of sin, but from the inbeing of sin. In heaven we shall not need to pray this prayer, *Deliver us from evil.* What a blessed time will it be, when we shall never have a vain thought more? Then Christ's spouse shall be *sine macula & ruga*, without spot or wrinkle, *Eph. v. 27.* Now there's a dead man tied to the living; we cannot do any holy duty, but we mix sin; we cannot pray without wandering; we cannot believe without doubting; but then, our virgin-souls shall not be capable of the least tincture of sin, but we shall all be as the angels of God.

In heaven we shall have no temptation to sin. The old serpent is cast out of paradise, and his fiery darts shall never come near to touch us.

2d. *Use of exhortation.* And it hath two distinct branches.

I. *Branch.* To all in general. If sin be so great and prodigious an evil, then, as you love your souls, take heed of sin. If you taste of the forbidden fruit, it will cost you dear, it will cost you bitter tears, it may cost you lying in hell: O therefore flee from sin.

(1.) Take heed of sins of omission, *Matth. xxiii. 23.* It is as well dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do things forbidden. Some think it no great matter to omit reading scripture: the Bible lies by like rusty armour, which they never use: they think it no great matter to omit family or closet-prayer; they can go several months, and God never hear of them. These have nothing sanctified to them; they feed upon a curse; *For every creature is sanctified by prayer,* 1 Tim. iv. 5. The bird may shame many, it never takes a drop, but the eye is lifted up towards heaven. Oh take heed of living in the neglect of any known duty. It was the prayer of a reverend holy man on his death-bed, "Lord, forgive my sins of omission."

(2.) Take heed of secret sins. Some are more modest than to sin openly in a balcony; but they will carry their sins under a canopy, they will sin in secret. *Rachael* did not let her father's images be seen, but she put them under her, and sat upon them, *Gen. xxxi. 34.* Many will be drunk, and unclean, if they may do it when no

body may see them; they are like one that shuts up his shop-windows, but follows his trade within doors. But if sin be so great an evil, let me warn you this day not to sin in secret: know, that you can never sin so privately, but that there are two witnesses always by, God and conscience.

(3.) Take heed of your complexion-sin, that sin which your nature and constitution doth most incline you to. As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin, *Pf. xviii. 23.* I have kept myself from nine iniquity. There is some sin that is a special favourite, the *peccatum in deliciis*, the darling-sin that lies in the bosom, and this doth bewitch and draw away the heart. O beware of this.

Qu. How may this darling-sin be known?

Ans. 1. That sin which a man doth most cherish, and to which all other sins are subservient; this is the sin which is most tended and waited upon: the Pharisees darling-sin was vain-glory, all they did was to feed this sin of pride, *Matth. vi. 2.* That they may have glory of men: when they gave alms, they sounded a trumpet. If a stranger had asked the question, *Why doth this trumpet sound?* The answer was, the Pharisees are going to give alms to the poor. Their lamp of charity was filled with the oil of vain-glory, *Matth. xxiii. 5.* All their works for to be seen of men. Pride was their bosom-sin. Oftentimes covetousness is the darling-sin; all other sins are committed to maintain this. Why do men equivocate, oppress, defraud, take bribes? all is to uphold covetousness.

2. That sin which a man doth not love to have reprov'd, is the darling-sin: *Herod* could not endure to have his incest spoken against: if *John Baptist* meddles with that sin, it shall cost him his head.

3. That sin which hath most power over one, and doth most easily lead him captive, that is the beloved of the soul. There are some sins a man can better put off, and give a repulse to: but there is one sin, which, if it comes to be a suiter, he cannot deny, but is overcome by it; this is the bosom-sin. The young man in the gospel had a complexion-sin which he could not resist, and that was the love of the world; his silver was dearer to him than his saviour. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a lust, that he will part with the kingdom of heaven to gratify it.

4. That sin which men use arguments to defend, is the darling-sin. To plead for sin, is

to be the devil's attorney: if the sin be covetousness, and we vindicate it; if it be rash anger, and we justify it, *Jonah* iv. 9. *I do well to be angry*: this is the complexion-sin.

5. That sin which doth most trouble one, and flee in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the beloved sin. When *Joseph's* brethren were distressed, their sin came to remembrance in selling their brother, *Gen.* xii. 21. So, when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, Dost not thou remember how thou hast lived in such a sin, though thou hast been often warned, yet thou wouldst not leave it? Conscience reads a curtain-lecture; sure that was the *darling-sin*.

6. That sin which a man is most *unwilling to part with*, that is the *darling sin*. *Jacob* could of all his sons, most hardly part with *Benjamin*, *Gen.* xlii. 36. *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away*. So saith the sinner, this and that sin have I parted with; but must *Benjamin* go? must I part with this delightful sin? that goes to the heart. This is the *Dalilah*, the beloved sin. O if sin be such a deadly evil, dare not to indulge any bosom-sin: this is of all other most dangerous: like an humour striking to the heart, which is mortal. Leave open but one gap, the wild beast may enter at it: one darling sin lived in, is setting open a gap for Satan to enter.

(4.) Take heed of the sins which attend your particular callings. A calling you must live in; *Adam* in paradise tilled the ground; God never sealed warrants to idleness; but every calling hath its snare; as some sin in living out of a calling, so others sin in a calling. Remember how deadly an evil sin is; avoid those sins which you may be exposed to in your trade; take heed of all fraud and collusion in your dealings, *Matth.* vii. 12. *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*.

1. Take heed of a deceitful tongue in selling: the scripture makes it the character of one that goes to heaven, *Pf.* xv. 2. *He speaketh the truth from his heart*. It is the custom of many to say, the commodity stands them more, yet take less. This is hardly credible.

2. Beware of a deceitful balance, *Hof.* xii. 7. *The balances of deceit are in his hand*. Men, by making their weights lighter, make their account heavier.

3. Beware of sophisticating, mingling and embasing commodities, *Amos* viii. 6. *They sell the refuse of the wheat*. They would pick out

the best grains of the wheat, and sell the worst at the same price as they did the best; to mix a coarser commodity with a fine, and yet sell it all for fine, is no better than deceit, *Isa.* i. 22.

2. Beware of stretching your consciences too far, or taking more for a commodity than it is worth, *Lev.* xxv. 14. *If thou sellest ought unto thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another*. There is a lawful gain allowed, yet one may not so advantage himself as to damnify another. Let that be the tradesman's motto, *Acts* xxiv. 16. *A conscience void of offence towards God and towards man*. He hath an hard bargain, that doth purchase the world with the loss of his soul.

5. Sin being so deadly an evil, take heed of the appearance of evil. Abstain not only from apparent evil, but the appearance of evil; if it be not absolutely a sin, yet if it looks like sin, avoid it. He who is loyal to his prince, not only forbears to have his hand in treason, but he will take heed of that which had a shew of treason. *Joseph's* mistress tempted him, and he fled and would not be with her, *Gen.* xxxix. 12. An appearance of good is too little, and an appearance of evil is too much.

(1.) The appearance of evil is oft an occasion of evil: dalliance is an appearance of evil, and oftentimes it occasions evil. Touching the forbidden fruit, may occasion tasting: dancing in masquerades, hath often been the occasion of uncleanness.

(2.) The appearance of evil may scandalize another, *1 Cor.* viii. 12. When ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ: sinning against a member of Christ, is a sinning against Christ.

Thus you see, sin being so deadly an evil, we should avoid all sin; sins of omission, secret sins, complexion-sins that attend our particular calling, yea the appearance of evil.

Qu. *What means shall we use to be kept from the acts of sin?*

Ans. 1. If you would be preserved from actual and scandalous sins, labour to mortify original sin. If you would not have the branches bud and blossom, smite at the root. I know original sin cannot in this life be removed, but labour to have it subdued. Why do men break forth into actual sins, but because they do not mortify heart sins? Suppress the first risings of pride, lust, passion: original sin unmortified, will prove a root of bitterness, as will bring forth the fruit of scandalous sin.



2. If you would be kept from actual sins, think what an odious thing sin is. Besides what you have heard, remember, sin is *the accursed thing*, Josh. vii. 21. It is the abominable thing God hates, *Jer. xlii. 4. O do not this abominable thing that I hate.* Sin is the spirits of witchcraft; it is the devil's excrement; it is called *Filthiness*, James i. 21. If all the evils in the world were put together, and their quintessence strained out, they could not make a thing so filthy as sin doth. So odious is a sinner, that God lothes the sight of him, *Zech. xi. 3. My soul lothed them.* He who defiles himself with avarice, what is he but a serpent licking the dust? He who defiles himself with the lust of uncleanness, what is he but a swine with a man's head? He who defiles himself with pride, what is he but a bladder, whom the devil hath blown up? He who defiles himself with drunkenness, what is he but a beast that hath got the staggers? To consider how odious and base a thing sin is, would be a means to keep us from sinning.

3. If you would be kept from actual sins, get the fear of God planted in your hearts, *Prov. xvi. 6. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. Cavebis si pavebis;* fear is a bridle to sin, and a spur to holiness. Fear puts an holy awe upon the heart, and binds it to its good behaviour. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. When the empress *Eudoxia*, threatened to banish *Chrysestom*, Tell her (saith he) *I fear nothing but sin.* Fear is *janitor animæ*; it stands as a porter at the door of the soul, and keeps sin from entring: all sin is committed for want of the fear of God, *Rom. iii. 14. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Holy fear stands centinel, and is ever watching against security, pride, wantonness. Fear is a christian's life-guard, to defend him against the fiery darts of temptation. *Si vis esse securus, semper time.* The way to be safe, is always to fear, *Prov. xxviii. 14.*

(4.) If we would be kept from actual sins, let us be careful to avoid all the inlets and occasions of sin; run not into *evil company*; he that would not have the plague, will not go into an infected house. Guard your *senses*, which may be the inlets to sin. Keep the two portals, the *eye* and the *ear*; especially, look to your *eye*; much sin comes in by the *eye*, the *eye* is oft an inlet to sin, sin takes fire at the *eye*: the first sin in the world began at the *eye*, *Gen. iii. 6.*

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was pleasant to the eyes, then she took of the fruit thereof. Looking begat lusting. Intemperance begins at the eye: looking on the wine when it is red, and gives its colour in the glass, causeth excess of drinking, *Prov. xxi. 31.* Covetousness begins at the eye, *Josh. vii. 21. When I saw among the spoils, a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, I coveted and took them.* The fire of lust begins to kindle at the eye; *David walking upon the roof of his house, saw a woman washing herself, and she was (saith the text) beautiful to look upon, and he sent messengers and took her, and defiled himself with her,* 2 Sam. xi. 2. O therefore look to your eyes, *Job made a covenant with his eyes,* Job xxxi. 1. If the eye be once inflamed, it will be hard to stand out long against sin: if the out-works are taken by the enemy, there is great danger of taking the whole castle.

5. If you would be kept from actual gross sin, study sobriety and temperance, 1 Pet. v. 3. *Sobrii este, be sober.* Check the inordinacy of appetite; sin doth frequently make its entrance this way. By gratifying the sensitive appetite, the soul, that is a-kin to angels, is enslaved to the brutish part. Many drink, if not to drunkenness, yet to drowsiness. The not denying the sensitive appetite, makes mens conscience so full of guilt, and the world so full of scandal. If you would be kept from running into sin, lay restraint upon the flesh. What hath God given reason and conscience for, but to be a bridle to check inordinate desires?

6. If you would be kept from actual sins, be continually upon your spiritual watch.

(1.) Watch your thoughts, *Jer. iv. 14. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Sin begins at the thoughts. First, men cherish revengeful thoughts, then they dip their hands in blood. Set a spy over your thoughts.

(2.) Watch your passions: passions of anger, passions of lust. The heart is ready to be destroyed by its own passions, as the vessel is to be overturned by the sail. Passion transports beyond the bounds of reason; it is *brevis insania*, Seneca. A short frenzy. *Moses*, in a passion, spake unadvisedly with his lips, *Psal. cvi. 33.* The disciples, in a passion, called for fire from heaven. A man in a passion, is like a ship in a storm, that hath neither pilot nor sails to help it, but is exposed to the waves and rocks.

(3.) Watch your temptations. Satan continually lies in ambush, and watcheth to draw us to sin; *stat in procinctu diabolus*: he is fishing for our souls; he is either laying of snares, or shooting of darts; therefore we had need watch the tempter, that we be not decoyed into sin. Most sin is committed for want of watchfulness.

7. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, consult with the oracles of God, be well versed in scripture, *Pf. cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* The word is, *anceps gladius*, a two-edged sword, to cut assunder mens lusts. When the fogs and vapours of sin begin to arise, let but the light of scripture shine into the soul, and it dispels those fogs: *let the word of Christ dwell richly in you, Col. iii. 16.* *Alphonfus* king of *Arragon*, read over the Bible fourteen times. The word shews the damnable evil of sin, it furnisheth us *precepts*, which are so many *receipts* and *antidotes* against sin. When Christ had a temptation to sin, he beat the tempter, and wounded him three times with this sword of the spirit, *It is written.*

Why do men live in sin, but because they either do not read the word, or do not believe it?

8. If you would be preserved from gross, presumptuous sin, get your hearts fired with love to God. Love hath great force in it, it is *strong as death*, it breaks the league between the heart and sin.

Two things in God cause love,

(1.) His *orient beauty*: *Moses* desired to see some glimpse of it, *Lord, shew me thy glory.*

(2.) His *amazing love*: what a prodigy of love was it, to give his Son out of his bosom, and lay such a jewel to pawn for our redemption! these two, the *orient* of God's beauty, and the *magnitude* of his love, may like two loadstones, draw our love to God; and if we love him, we will not sin against him; he that loves his friend, will not by any means displease him. I have read of four men, meeting together, who asked one another, what it was that kept him from sinning? One said, the fear of hell; another said, the joys of heaven; the third said, the odiousness of sin; the fourth said, that which keeps me from sin, is, love to God; shall I sin against so good a God? shall I abuse love? Love to God is the best curbing-bit to keep from sin.

9. If you would be kept from the evil of

sin, be diligent in a calling. *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt*---*Adam* in paradise must till the ground. Such as live idly, expose themselves to sin: if we have no work to do, Satan will find us work; he sows most of his seed in fallow-ground. A woman being much tempted to sin, came to the reverend Mr. *Greenham* for advice, what she should do to resist the temptation? He gave her this answer, be always well employed, that so when Satan comes, he may find thee busied in thy calling, and thou mayest not be at leisure to listen to his temptations.

10. If you would be kept from sin, fix the eye of your mind upon the *beauty of holiness*. Holiness consists in our conformity to God: holiness is the sparkling of the divine nature, a beam of God shining in the soul. How lovely is Christ's bride, when deck'd and bespangled with the jewels of holiness? What makes the seraphims angels of light; but their holiness? Do but think with yourselves what a splendid, glorious thing holiness is, and it will cause a disgust and hatred of sin, which is so contrary to it. The beholding of beauty, makes one out of love with deformity.

11. If you would keep from the evil of sin, meditate frequently on death, *First*, The unavoidable-ness of it, *Heb. ix. 27. Statutum est, It is appointed for all men once to die.* We are not so sure to ly down this night in bed, as we are to ly down in the grave. *Second*. The uncertainty of the time. We are but *tennants at will*: we hold our life at the will of our landlord, and how soon may God turn us out of this house of clay? Death oft comes when we least look for it. The flood (as some learned writers observe) came in the month *Ziph* or *April*, in the spring; when the trees were blossoming, and the birds singing, then came the flood, when they least looked for it: so oft in the spring of youth, when the body is most healthy, and the spirits most sprightly and vigorous, and death is least thought on, then it comes. Could we think often and seriously of death, it would give a death's-wound to sin. *Nihil sic revocato peccata quam crebra mortis contemplatio*, Aug. No stronger antidote against sin than this: I am now singing, and to-morrow may be dying? What, if death should take me doing the devil's work, would it not send me to him to receive my wages? Would but the adulterer think, I am now in the act of sin, but how soon may death come, and then I who have burned in lust, must burn in hell:

This



This sure would strike a damp into him, and make him afraid of going after strange flesh.

12. If you would be kept from gross scandalous sins, beware of a covetous heart. Covetousness is a *dry drunkenness*. He who thirsts insatiably after the world will stick at no sin, he will betray Christ and a good cause for money. *Cui nihil satis, eidem nihil turpe*, Tacitus. 1 Tim. vi. 10. *The love of money is the root of all evil*. From this root comes, *first* theft. *Achan's* covetous humour made him steal the wage of gold, *Josh. vii. 21*. Covetousness makes the goals so full. *Secondly*, from this root comes murder. Why did *Ahab* stone *Naboth* to death, but to possess his vineyard? 1 Kings xxi. 13. Covetousness hath made many swim to the crown in blood. *Thirdly*, From this bitter root of covetousness proceeds covetage: it is the covetous hand holds false weights. *Fourthly*, From this root of covetousness comes uncleanness. You read of the *hire* of a whore, *Deut. xxiii. 18*. For money she would let both her conscience and chastity be set to sale. O if you would be kept from the evil of sin, beware of covetousness which is the inlet to so many sins.

13. Let us be much in prayer to God, to keep us from ingulphing ourselves in sin, *Psa. xix. 13. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins*. We have no power inherent to keep ourselves from evil. *Arnoldus* saith, that man, in his corrupt estate, hath *aliquas reliquias vitæ spiritualis*—some reliques of spiritual life left. And *Arminius* saith, man hath a sufficiency of grace in himself, whereby he may *abstinere a malo*, abstain from evil; free-will is a sufficient curb to check and pull him back from sin. But then what needed Christ to have taught us this prayer; *Libera nos a malo, Deliver us from evil*? If we have power of ourselves to keep from sin, what need we pray to God for power? Alas! If *David* and *Peter*, who had an habit of grace, fell, for want of a fresh gale of the spirit to hold them up, much more will they be in danger of falling, who have only the power of free-will to hold them.

Let us therefore sue to God for strength to keep us from sinning: pray that prayer of *David*, *Pf. cxix. 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe*. And that other prayer, *Pf. xvii. 5. Hold up my goings in thy paths that my foot-steps slip not*. Lord, keep me from dishonouring thee, keep me from the defiling sins of the age, that I may not be worse for the times, nor the times

the worse for me. *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins*. Lord, whatever I suffer, keep me from sin. The child is safe in the nurse's arms; and we are only safe from falling into sin, while we are held up in the arms of Christ and free-grace.

II. *Branch* of the exhortation hath an aspect to God's children. You that are professors, and carry Christ's colours, I beseech you, above all others, to take heed of sin; beware of any action that is scandalous and unbecoming the gospel: you have heard what a prodigious hyperbolical evil sin is. Come not near the forbidden fruit, *Hos. iv. 15. Though Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend*. So, though wicked men run into sin, yet, let not the spouse of Christ defile the breasts of her virginity. Sin doth ill become any, but it doth worse become professors. Dung is unhandsome in the street; but to see it in the temple, how offensive is it? Leprosy in the foot doth ill, but to see a leprous sore in the face is much worse; to see sin break forth in them who have a face of religion, is most to be abominated. The sins of the wicked are not so much wondered at, *Van. xii. 10. The wicked shall do wickedly*. It is no wonder to see a toad spit poison. It was not so much wondered to see *Cain* or *Ahab* sin; but to see *Lot's* incest, to see *David's* hands stained with blood, this was strange. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse.

The sins of God's people do, in some sense, more provoke God than the sins of the wicked. We read of the provoking of his sons and daughters, *Deut. xxxii. 19*. The sins of the wicked anger God, but the sins of the people grieve him. The sins of God's people have a more malignant aspect, and are of a blacker dye than others: there are those aggravations in the sins of God's people, as are not to be found in the sins of the unregenerate, in eight particulars.

For, 1. The godly have something which may *ponere obicem*, restrain them from sin. Wicked men, when they sin, have no principle to restrain them; they have wind and tide to carry them, but have nothing to pull them back from sin: but a child of God hath a principle of grace to give check to sin; he hath the impulses of God's spirit dissuading him from evil; therefore, for him to commit sin, is far worse than for others: this is to sin more desperately;

perately; it is, as if a woman should go about to kill the child in her womb. Christian, this thou art going to do; when thou sinnest presumptuously, thou dost what in thee lies to kill the babe of grace in thy soul.

2. The sins of God's people are greater than others, because they sin against more mercy. This is like a weight put in the scale, it makes sin weigh heavier. God hath given Christ to a believer; he hath cut him off from the wild stock of nature, and grafted him into the true olive; and for him to abuse all this mercy, it is to out-do the wicked, and to sin with an higher aggravation, because it is to sin against greater love. How was *Peter's* sin enhanced and accented? that when Christ had done more for him than others, he had dropped some of the holy oil upon him; he had taken him into the number of the apostles, he had carried him up into the mount of transfiguration, and shewn him the glory of heaven in a vision; now, that *Peter* should deny Christ after all this mercy, this was hainous and could not be forgiven, but by a prodigy, and miracle of love.

3. The sins of the godly are worse, and have this aggravation in them that they sin against more clear illuminations than the wicked, *Job. xxiv. 14.* They are of those that rebel against the light: Light is there taken figuratively for knowledge. It cannot be denied, but the wicked sin knowingly; but the godly have a light beyond them, such a divine penetrating light, as no hypocrite can attain unto; they have better eyes to see sin than others; and for them to meddle with sin, and embrace this dunghill, how must this needs provoke God, and make the fury rise up in his face? Oh therefore, you that are the people of God, flee from sin; your sins are more enhanced, and have worse aggravations than the sins of the unregenerate.

4. The sins of the godly are worse than the sins of the unregenerate; for, when they sin, it is against great experiences. They have felt the bitterness of sin in the pangs of the new-birth, and afterwards God hath spoken peace, and they have had an experimental taste how *sweet the Lord is*; and yet, after these experiences, that they should touch the forbidden fruit, venture upon a presumptuous sin, how doth this enhance and aggravate their guilt, and is like putting a weight more in the scale to make their sin weigh heavier? The wicked, when they sin, never tasted the sweet-

ness of an heavenly life; they never knew what it was to have any smiles from God; they never tasted any thing sweeter than corn and wine, therefore no wonder if they sin: but for a child of God, who hath had such love-tokens from heaven, and signal experiences from God, for him to gratify a lust, how horrid is this! it was an aggravation of *Solomon's* sin, that his heart was turned from the Lord which had appeared to him twice, *1 Kings xi. 9.*

5. The sins of the godly are greater than others, because they sin against their *sonship*. When wicked men sin, they sin against the command; but when the godly sin, they sin against a privilege, they abuse their *sonship*. The godly are adopted into the family of heaven, they have a *new name*: it is a light thing (said *David*) to be son-in-law to a king? So, to be called the sons of God, to be heirs of the promises, is no small honour: now, for such to run into an open offence, it is a sinning against their adoption; they hereby make themselves vile, as if a king's son should be tumbling in the mire, or ly among swine.

6. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they are committed against more vows and engagements. They have given up their names to God; they have bound themselves solemnly to God by oath, *Pf. cxix. 106. I have sworn that I will keep thy statutes.* And in the supper of the Lord they have renewed this sacred vow; and, after this, to run into a presumptuous sin, it is a breach of vow, a kind of perjury, which dyes the sin of a crimson colour.

7. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they bring a greater reproach upon religion. For the wicked to sin, there is no other expected from them; swine will wallow in the mire: but when sheep do so, when the godly sin, that redounds to the dishonour of the gospel, *2 Sam. xii. 24. By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* A stain in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it: for the godly to sin, it is like a spot in scarlet, it is more taken notice of, and it reflects a greater dishonour upon the ways of God. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse. How doth the gospel suffer by the miscarriages of the  
Y y y      godly?



godly? Their blood never can wash off the stain that they bring upon religion.

8. The sins of the godly are worse, because they are a means to encourage and harden wicked men in sin. If the wicked see the godly to be loose and uncircumspect in their lives they think they may do so too: the wicked make the godly their pattern, not in imitating their virtues, but their vices; and is not this fearful to be a means to damn others? These are the aggravations of the sins of the godly; therefore you, above all others, beware of presumptuous sin: your sins wound conscience, weaken grace, and do more highly provoke God than the sins of others, and God will be sure to punish you; whoever escapes, you shall not, *Amos* iii. 3. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* If God doth not damn you, yet he may send you to hell in this life; he may cause such agonies and tremblings of heart, that you will be a terror to your selves: you may draw nigh to despair, and be ready to look upon yourselves as castaways. When *David* had stained himself with adultery and murder, he complained of his broken bones, *Psa.* li. 8. A metaphor to set forth the grief and agony of his soul: he lay in sore desertion three quarters of a year, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to his dying day. Oh therefore you who belong to God, and are enrolled in his family, take heed of blemishing your profession with scandalous sin; you will pay dear for it; think of the broken bones: though God doth not blot you out of this book, yet he may cast you out of his presence, *Psa.* li. 11. He may keep you in long desertion. You may feel such lashes in your conscience, [that you may rore out, and think yourselves half in hell.]

So much for the first, *deliver us from evil*: we pray to be delivered from evil in general, that is *sin*.

Secondly, in special. *Deliver us from evil.* We pray to be delivered from evil, under a threefold notion. (1.) From the evil of our heart. It is called an *evil heart*, *Heb.* iii. 12. (2.) From the evil of Satan. He is called the *evil one*, *Matth.* xiii. 19. (3.) From the evil of the world. It is called an *evil world*, *Gal.* i. 4.

1<sup>st</sup>. In this petition, *deliver us from evil*, we pray to be delivered from the evil of our heart, that it may not decoy and trap us in-

to sin. The heart is the poisoned fountain, from whence all actual sins flow, *Mark* vii. 21. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, fornications, murders.* The cause of all evil lies in a man's own breast, *all sin begins at the heart.* Lust is first conceived in the heart, and then it is midwifed into the world. Whence comes rash anger? The heart sets the tongue on fire. The heart is a shop or work-house, where all sin is contrived and hammered out; how needful therefore is this prayer, *deliver us from evil*, from the evil of our hearts? The heart is the greatest seducer, therefore the apostle *James* saith, *every man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*, *James* i. 14. The devil could not hurt us, if our own hearts did not give consent. All that he can do is, to lay the bait, but it is our fault to swallow the bait.

O let us pray to be delivered from the lusts and deceits of our own hearts, *deliver us from evil*: *Luther* feared his heart more than the pope or cardinal: and it was *Austin's* prayer, *libera me, Domine, a meipso*; Lord, deliver me from myself. It was a good advice one gave to his friend, *caveas teipsum*. Beware of the bosom traitor, the flesh. The heart of man is the *Trojan* horse out of which comes a whole army of lusts.

2<sup>dly</sup>. In this petition, *Deliver us from evil*, we pray to be delivered from the evil of Satan. He is the *evil one*. *Mat.* xiii. 19.

Qu. In what respect is Satan the evil one?

Ans. 1. He is the first inventor of evil, *John* viii. 44. He blotted the first treason.

2. His inclination is only to evil, *Eph.* vi. 12.

3. His constant practice is doing evil, 1 *Pet.* v. 8.

(1.) He hinders from good, *Zech.* iii. 1. *He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan at his right-hand to resist him.*

(2.) He provokes to evil; he put it into *Anania's* heart to lie, *Acts* v. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?* The devil blows the fire of lust and strife. When men are proud, the old serpent hath poisoned them, and makes them swell. Thus he is the *evil one*; and well may we pray, *Lord, deliver us from the evil one.* The word *Satan* in the Hebrew signifies an *opponent* or *adversary*.

1. He is a *restless* adversary, he never sleeps; spirits need no sleep. He is a *peripatetic*, *He walks about*, 2 *Pet.* v. 8. And, how doth he walk? Not as a pilgrim, but as a spy; he narrowly

rowly observes where he may plant his pieces of battery, and make his assault with most advantage against us. Satan is a subtil *engineer*; there is no place that can secure us from Satan's assaults and inroads. We find him while we are praying, hearing, meditating. We are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it.

2. Satan is a puissant adversary, he is armed with power. He is called the *strong man*, Luke xi. 21. He takes men captive at his pleasure, 2 Tim. ii. 26. *Who are taken captive by him at his will*, who are taken alive by him. It alludes to a bird that is taken alive in the snare; thus you see he is the evil one. The devil's work is to angle for mens soul: he lays suitable baits; he allures the ambitious man with honour, the covetous man with riches: he hooks his baits with silver; he allures the lustful man with beauty, he tempts men to *Dalilah's* lap to keep them from *Abraham's* bosom. The devil glories in the damnation of souls. How needful then is this prayer, *Deliver us from evil*? Lord, keep us from the evil one; though Satan may sollicit us to sin, suffer us not to give consent; though he may assault the castle of our hearts, yet let us not deliver up the keys of the castle to our mortal enemy.

3dly, In this petition, *Deliver us from evil*, we pray to be delivered from the evil of the world. It is called an *evil world*, Gal. i. 4. not but that the world (as God made it) is good, but *through our corruption* it becomes evil, we had need pray, deliver us from an evil world.

Qu. *In what sense is it an evil world?*

Ans. 1. As it is a defiling world. It is like living in an infectious air, it requires an high degree of grace to keep ourselves *unspotted from the world*, James i. 27. It is as hard to live in the world and not be defiled, as to go much in the sun, and not be tanned.

(1.) The opinions of the world are defiling; that a little religion will serve the turn; like leaf-gold, it must be spread, but thin: that morality runs parallel with grace: that to be zealous, is to be righteous over much. That it is better to keep the skin whole than the conscience pure: that the flesh is rather to be gratified than mortified. These opinions of the world are defiling.

(2.) The examples of the world are defiling examples, have a great force in them to draw us to evil,----*Princeps imperio magnus exemplo major*, Princes are looking-glasses which we

dress ourselves by; if they do evil, we are apt to imitate them. Great men are copies we set before us, and usually we write most like the copy when it is blotted. There is a great proneness in us to follow the examples of the world; therefore God hath put in a *caveat* against it, *Exod. xxiii. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*. How easily are we hurried to sin, when we have the tide of *natural corruption*, and the wind of example to carry us? *Lot* was the world's wonder; the complexion of his soul kept pure in *Sodom's* infectious air. The river of *Peru* in *America*, after it hath run into the main sea, keeps fresh, and doth not mingle with the salt waters; to this river might *Lot* be compared, whose piety kept fresh in *Sodom's* salt water. Bad examples are *catching*, Ps. cvi. 35. *They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works*. Had not we need then pray, Lord, deliver us from this evil world? Living in the world, is like travelling in a dirty road.

2. It is an evil world, as it is an ensnaring world. The world is full of snares. Company is a snare, recreation is a snare, oaths are snares, riches are golden snares;----*Opes irritamenta malorum*. The apostle speaks of *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. The lust of the flesh is beauty, the lust of the eye is money, the pride of life is honour; these are the natural man's trinity. *In mundo splendor opum, gloriae majestas, voluptatum illecebrae ab amore Dei nos abstrahunt*. The world is a flattering enemy, whom it kisses, it oft betrays; it is a silken halter: the pleasure of the world, like opium, cast men into the sleep of security. *Lyfsmachus* sold his crown for a draught of water; so many part with heaven for the world. It is an ensnaring world: the king of *Armenia* was sent prisoner to queen *Cleopatra* in golden fetters; too many are enslaved with the world's golden fetters. The world bewitched *Demas*, 2 Tim. iv. 10. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. It is hard to drink the wine of prosperity, and not be giddy. Thus the world, through our innate corruption, is evil, as it is a snare, 1 Tim. vi. 9. *They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare*. If an angel were to live here, there were no danger of the world's ensnaring him, because he hath no principle within to receive the temptation; but we have a corrupt principle that suits with the temptation, and that makes us always in danger.

3. It is an evil world, as it is a discouraging world.



world. It casts scorn and reproach upon them who live virtuously; what, you will be holier than others, wiser than your ancestors? The world deals with the professors of religion, as *Sanballat* did with the Jews, when they were building, *Nehem.* iv. 1. *He mocked the Jews, and said, what do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish that are burnt?* So the wicked world casts out squibs of reproach at the godly, what, will ye build for heaven? What needs all this cost? What profit is it to serve the Almighty? Thus the world would pluck off our chariot-wheels when we are driving towards heaven: they are called *cruel mockings*, *Heb.* xi. 36. It requires a great measure of sanctity to withstand the discouragements of the world, to dance among serpents, to laugh at reproaches, and bind them as a crown about our head.

4. It is an evil world, as it is a deadning world. It dulls and deadneth the affections to heavenly objects. The world cools holy motions, like a damp in a silver-mine, which puts out the light: earthly things choke the seed of the word. A man intangled in the world, is so taken up about secular concerns, that he can no more mind the things above, than the earth can ascend, or the elephant fly in the air; and, even such as have grace in them, yet, when their affections are belimed with the earth, they find themselves much indisposed to meditation and prayer; it is like swimming with a stone about the neck.

5. It is an evil world, as it is a maligning world. It doth disgust and hate the people of God, *John* xv. 19. *Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* Hatred is (as *Aristotle* saith) against the whole kind. *Haman's* hatred was against the seed of the whole Jews. When you can find a serpent without a sting, or a leopard without spots, then you may expect to find a wicked world without hatred. The white that is shot at is piety, *Psa.* xxxviii. 20. *They are mine adversaries, because I follow the thing that is good.* The world pretends to hate the godly for something else, but the ground of the quarrel is holiness. The world's hatred is implacable: anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot: you may as well reconcile heaven and hell, as the two seeds. If the world hated Christ, no wonder it hates us, *John* xv. 18. *The world hated me before it hated you.* Why should any hate Christ? This

blessed Dove had no gall, this rose of *Sharon* did send forth a most sweet perfume, but this shews the world's baseness, it is a Christ-hating and a saint-hating world. Had not we need to pray, deliver us from this evil world?

6. It is an evil world, as it is a deceitful world.

(1.) There is a deceit in dealing, *Hos.* xii. 7. *He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.* The Hebrew word *rimmah* in *pyhil*, signifies both to deceive and oppress. He who dares use deceit, will not spare to oppress.

(2) There is a deceit in friendship, *Prov.* xx. 6. *But a faithful man who can find?*

-----*Trita frequensque via est per amici fallere nomen.*-----

Some use too much courtship in friendship; they are like trumpets which make a great noise, but within they are hollow. Some can flatter and hate, commend and censure. *Mel.* in ore, *fel.* in corde. Dissembled love is worse than hatred.

(3.) There is deceit in riches, *Mat.* xiii. 22. *The deceitfulness of riches.* The world makes us believe it will satisfy our desires, and it doth but increase them; it makes us believe it will stay with us, and it takes wings, *Prov.* xxiii. 5.

7. It is an evil world, as it is a disquieting world. It is full of trouble, *John* xvi. 33. The world is like a bee-hive; when we have tasted a little honey, we have been stung with a thousand bees. *St. Basil* was of opinion, that before the fall, the rose did grow without prickles; but now every sweet flower of our life hath its prickles. There are many things cause disquiet; loss of friends, law-suits, crosses in estate: relations are not without their troubles; some are troubled that they want children, others troubled that they have children; the world is a vexing vanity. If a man be poor, he is despised by the rich; if he be rich, he is envied by the poor. If we do not find it an ensnaring world, we shall find it an afflicting world; it hath more in it to wean us than tempt us. The world is a sea, where we are tossed upon the surging waves of sorrow, and often in danger of shipwreck; the world is a wilderness, full of fiery serpents. [What storms of persecution are raised against the righteous? *2 Tim.* iii. 12.] The wicked are *briars*, *Mic.* vii. 4. where Christ's sheep lose some of their golden fleece. Then had we not need pray, Lord, deliver us from being hurt by this evil world?

Why

why should we love the world? Though we are commanded to love our enemies, yet this enemy we must not love; 1 John ii. 15. *Love not the world.*

I have been all this while opening the first sense of this petition, *Deliver us from evil*; we pray to be delivered from sin in general, and to be delivered from evil under this threefold notion, from the evil of our heart, from the evil of Satan, from the evil of the world. Ere I leave this, let me insert a

*Caution.* Not that our abstaining from, or forbearing the external acts of sin, is sufficient to entitle us to salvation: but when we pray, *Deliver us from evil*, there is more implied in it, namely, that *we make a progress in holiness*. Being divorced from sin is not enough, unless we are espoused to virtue; therefore in scripture these two are joined, *Pf. xxxiv. 14. Depart from evil, and do good.* Rom. xii. 9. and *Isa. i. 16. Cease to do evil, learn to do well.* 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness.* Leaving sin is not enough, unless we embrace righteousness. *Virtutis est magis honesta agere, quam non turpia.* As it is in the body, it is not enough that the disease be stopped, but it must grow in health; so it is in the soul, it is not enough acts of sin be forborn (which is the stopping a disease) but it must be healthy, that is, grow in holiness.

*Use.* Which reproves those who labour only to suppress the outward acts of sin, but do not press on to holiness; they cease from doing evil, but do not learn to do well. Their religion lies only in negatives: they glory in this, that they are given to no vice, none can charge them with any foul miscarriages, *Luke xviii. 11. God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers.* This is not enough, you must advance a step further in solid piety: it is not enough that a field be not sown with tares or hemlock, but it must be sown with good seed. Consider two things,

1. If this be the best certificate you have to shew that you are not guilty of gross sins, God makes no account of you. A piece of brass, though it be not so bad as clay, yet not being so good as silver, it will not pass for current coin; so, though you are not grossly profane, yet not being of the right metal, wanting the stamp of holiness, you will never pass current in heaven.

2. A man may abstain from evil, yet he may

go to hell for not doing good, *Matth. iii. 10. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* Why were the foolish virgins shut out? they had done no hurt, they had not broke their lamps; yea, but their fault was, there was no goodness in them, they had no oil in their lamps. Oh therefore let us not content ourselves in being free from gross acts of sin, but let us launch forth further in holiness; let us cleanse ourselves from all pollution, perfecting holiness.

Secondly, *Deliver us from evil*, that is, from temporal evil. We pray that God will either prevent temporal evils, or deliver us out of them.

1. We pray that God will prevent temporal evils; that he will be our screen to stand between us and danger, *Pf. vii. 1. Save me from them that persecute me.* We may lawfully pray against the plots of the wicked, that they may prove abortive; that, though they have a design upon us, they may not have their desire upon us, *Pf. cxli. 9. Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me.*

2. We pray that God will deliver us out of temporal evils; that he will remove his judgments from us, whether famine, sword, pestilence, *Pf. xxxix. 10. Remove thy stroke away from me.* Yet with this

*Caution.* We may pray to be delivered from temporal evils, only so far as God sees it good for us. We may pray to be delivered from the evil of sin absolutely, but we must pray to be delivered from temporal evils conditionally, so far as God sees it fitting for us, and may stand with his glory.

*Use.* In all the troubles that ly upon us, let us look up to God for ease and succour; *Deliver us from evil, Isa. viii. 19. Should not a people seek unto their God? To blame then are the papists, who knock at the wrong door; when they are in any trouble, they pray to the saints to deliver them; when they are in danger of shipwreck, they pray to St. Nicholas; when they are in the fit of a fever, they pray to St. Petronelle; when they are in travail, they pray to St. Margaret.* How unlawful is it to invoke saints in prayer, I will prove from one scripture, *Rom. x. 14. How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? We may pray to none but such as we believe in; but we ought not to believe in any saint, therefore we may not pray to him.* The papists have, in their Lady's psalter, directed their



prayers for deliverance to the virgin *Mary*; Deliver me, O Lady. *Benedicta Domina, in manibus tuis reposita est nostra salus*; O thou blessed Lady, in thy hands our salvation is laid up. But *Abraham is ignorant of us*, Isa. lxiii. 16. The saints and virgin *Mary* are ignorant of us.

To pray to saints, is idolatry advanced to blasphemy. Our Saviour hath taught us better, in all our distresses to pray to God for a cure, *Deliver us from evil*.---He only knows what our troubles are, and can give us help from trouble;

he only, that laid the burden on, can take it off. *David* went to God, *Pf. xxv. 17. O bring thou me out of my distresses*. God can, with a word, heal, *Pf. cvii. 20. He sent forth his word, and healed them*. He delivered the three children out of the fiery furnace, *Joseph* out of prison, *Daniel* out of the lion's den; this proves him to be God, because none can deliver as he doth, *Dan. iii. 29. There is no other god that can deliver after this sort*. Let us then, in all our straits and exigencies, seek to God, and say, *Deliver us from evil*.

An ADDITION of some SERMONS preached by the Reverend Mr. THOMAS WATSON, formerly Minister of St. Stephen's Walbrook.

OF WISDOM AND INNOCENCY.

MATTH. x. 16. *Be ye therefore wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves.*

THE apostle saith, *All scripture is of divine inspiration*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. God's word is compared to a lamp, for its enlightning quality, *Pf. cxix. 105. and to silver refined*, for its enriching quality, *Pf. xii. 6*. Among other parts of sacred writ, this, in the text, is not the least; *Be ye wise as serpents, and innocent as doves*. This is the speech of our blessed Saviour; his lips were a tree of life which feed many; his works were miracles; his words were oracles, and deserve to be engraved upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond.

This is a golden sentence; *Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*. Our Lord Jesus, in this chapter, 1<sup>st</sup>. Gives his apostles their commissions. 2<sup>dly</sup>. Foretels their danger. 3<sup>dly</sup>. Gives them several instructions.

I. Christ gives his apostles their commission. Before they went abroad to preach, Christ ordains them, v. 5. *These twelve Jesus sent forth*. Those who exercise in the ministerial function, must have a lawful call, Heb. v. 4. *No man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called of God*. Christ gave not only the apostles and

prophets a call to their office (who were extraordinary ministers) but even pastors and teachers, Eph. iv. 11.

Qu. *But if one have gifts, is not this sufficient to the ministerial office?*

Ans. No: As grace is not sufficient to make a minister, so neither gifts; therefore it is observable, that the scripture puts a difference between gifting and sending, Rom. x. 15. *How shall they preach unless they be sent?* If gifts were enough to constitute a minister, the apostle should have said, *How shall they preach unless they be gifted?* But he saith, *Unless they be sent*: which denotes a lawful call, or investiture into the office. The attorney that pleads at the bar, may have as good gifts as the judge that sits upon the bench; but he must have a lawful commission before he sit as a judge. If it be thus in matters civil, much more in church-matters, which are of higher concern. Those therefore, who usurp the work of the ministry without being solemnly set apart for it, discover more pride than zeal, and they can expect no blessing, Jer. xxiii. 32. *I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit*

*profit this people, saith the Lord.* So much for the first, the apostles commission they received: *These twelve Jesus sent forth.*

II. Christ foretels their danger, *v. 16. Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* The apostles were going about a glorious work, but an hazardous work; they would meet with enemies fierce and savage, like wolves. As all that will live godly in Christ shall meet with sufferings; so commonly Christ's ambassadors encounter the deepest trials. Most of the apostles died by the hands of tyrants: *Peter* was crucified with his head downwards, *Luke* the evangelist was executed on an olive-tree, *John* was cast by *Domitian* into a vessel of scalding oil. *Maximus* the emperor (as *Eusebius* relates) gave charge to his officers, to put none to death but the governors and pastors of the church. The ministers are Christ's *antesignani*, his ensign-bearers, to carry his colours, therefore they are most shot at: they hold forth his truth, *Phil. i. 17. I am set for the defence of the gospel.* The Greek word, *Chemai*, alludes to a foldier that is set in the fore-front of the battle. and hath all the bullets flying about his ears. The minister's work is to part between men and their sins; and this causeth opposition. When *Paul* preached against *Diana*, all the city was in an uproar, *Acts xix.* This may stir up prayer for Christ's ministers, that they may be able to withstand the assaults of the enemy, *2 Theff. iii. 2.*

III. Christ gives the apostles their instructions, whereof this was one in the text; *Be ye wise as serpents, and innocent as doves.* (1.) The exhortation, *Be ye wise.* (2.) The simile, *as serpents.* (3.) The qualification of this wisdom; a wisdom mixed with innocency, *Harmless as doves.*

This union of the dove and the serpent is hard to find, *Matth. xxiv. 45. Who then is a wise and faithful servant?* On which place, saith *St. Chrysostom*, it is an hard matter to find one faithful and wise. Faithful, there is the dove; wise there is the serpent: 'tis hard to find both. If one would seek for a faithful man, questionless he may find many, if for a wise man, he may find many: but if he seek for one both wise and faithful, this is *rara avis*, hard to find, yet it is possible, though not common. *Moses*, a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, *Acts vii. 22.* there was the wisdom of the serpent; and the meekest man alive, *Numb. xii. 3. Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men*

*upon the face of the earth*; there was the innocency of the dove. *Daniel* was an excellent person, *Dan. v. 14. Excellent wisdom is found in thee*; there was the prudence of the serpent; and, *Dan. vi. 4. The presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel, but they could find no occasion or fault*; behold here the innocency of the dove. Look on *St. Paul*, *Acts xxiii. 6. When Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out, I am a Pharisee*; by which speech *Paul* got all the Pharisees on his side; here was the wisdom of the serpent: and *ver. 1. I have lived before God in all good conscience unto this day*; here was the innocency of the dove. How amiable is this, the union of the dove and serpent? The scripture joins these two together, *meekness and wisdom*, *Jam. iii. 13. Wisdom, there is the serpent; meekness, there is the dove.* This beautifies a christian, when he hath the serpent's eye in the dove's head. We must have innocency with our wisdom, else our wisdom is but craftiness: and we must have wisdom with our innocency, else our innocency is but weakness. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not circumvent others; and we must have the wisdom of the serpent, that others may not circumvent us. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not betray the truth; and the wisdom of the serpent, that we may not betray ourselves. In short, religion without policy, is too weak to be safe: policy without religion, is too subtil to be good. When wisdom and innocency, like *Caspar* and *Pollux*, appear together, they presage the soul's happiness.

DOCT. 3. *That christians must be both wise and innocent.*

I begin with the first, *wise: be wise as serpents.*

1. I shall speak concerning wisdom in general. *Solomon* saith, *Wisdom is the principal thing*, *Prov. iv. 7. It is better than riches*, *Prov. iii. 14. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver.* If the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea were a diamond, it were not comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom a person is like a ship without a pilot, in danger to split upon rocks. *Job* sets forth the encomium and praise of wisdom, *Job xxviii. 13. 18. The price of wisdom is above rubies.* The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red fiery colour. It is reported of one of the kings of India,



*India*, that he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendor, that he might be seen by it in the dark; but wisdom casts a more sparkling colour than the ruby, it makes us shine as angels. No chain of pearl you wear doth so adorn you as wisdom. Wisdom consists chiefly in three things; (1.) Knowledge to discern. (2.) Skill to judge. (3.) Activity to prosecute.

1. Knowledge to discern wherein happiness lies.

2. Skill to judge what will be the fittest means to conduce to it.

3. Activity to prosecute those things which will certainly accomplish that end. So much for wisdom in general.

More particularly: wisdom is variously distinguished. 'Tis either *Natural*, or *Moral*, or *Theological*.

1. A *Natural* wisdom; which is seen in finding out the *arcana naturæ*, the secrets of nature. *Aristotle* was, by some of the antients, called an eagle fallen from the clouds, because he was of such raised intellectuals, and had so profound an insight into the causes of things. This natural wisdom is adorning, but it is not sufficient to salvation. *St. Hierom* brings in *Aristotle* with his syllogisms, and *Tully* with his rhetoric, crying out in hell.

2. A *Moral* wisdom; which consists in two things; *malum respuendo, bonum eligendo*. Moral wisdom lies in the rejection of those things which are prejudicial, and the election of those things which are beneficial: this is called *prudence*. Knowledge without prudence may do hurt: many a man's wit hath undone him, for want of wisdom.

3. A *Theological*, or *Sacred* wisdom; which is our knowing of God, who is the supreme and sovereign good. *Greece* was counted the eye of the world, for wisdom; and *Athens* the eye of *Greece*; but neither of them knew God, *Acts* xvii. 23. *I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God.* To know God, in whom is both *verum & bonum*, truth and goodness, is the master-piece of wisdom, *1 Chron.* xxviii. 9. *And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father.* And this knowledge of God is through Christ; Christ is the glass in which the face of God is seen, *Col.* i. 15. And then we know God aright, when we know him not only with a knowledge of *speculation*, but *appropriation*, *Pf.* xlviii. 14. *This God is OUR God.* This knowledge of God is the most sublime wisdom; therefore it is called, *Wisdom from a-*

*bove*, *Ja.* iii. 17.

But to come nearer to the text, and speak of the wisdom of the serpent: *Be ye wise as serpents.*

Q. *But must we in every thing be like the serpent?*

Ans. No: our Saviour meant not that in every thing we should imitate the serpent. I shall shew you, (1.) Wherein we should not be like the serpent. (2.) Wherein we should be like the serpent.

I. Wherein we should not be like the serpent.

1. The serpent eats dust, *Isa.* lxxv. 25. *Dust shall be the serpent's meat.* It was a curse upon the serpent. Thus we should not be like the serpent, to feed immoderately upon earthly things. It is absurd for him that hath an heaven-born soul, capable of communion with God and angels, to eat greedily the serpent's meat: a christian hath better food to feed on; the heavenly manna, the precious promises, the body and blood of Christ. 'Tis counted a miracle to find a diamond in a golden mine; and it is as great a miracle to find Christ, the pearl of price, in an earthly heart. The *lapwing* wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung; to have a crown of profession on the head, yet feed inordinately on these dunghil-comforts, is unworthy of a christian. What a poor contemptible thing is the world? it cannot fill the heart; if Satan should take a christian up to the top of the pinnacle, and shew him all the kingdoms and glory of the world, what could he shew him, but a show, a pleasant delusion? There is a lawful use God allows of these outward things, but the sin is in the excess. The bee may suck a little honey from the leaf; but, put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned. The wicked are thus characterized, *Eph.* iii. 19. *They mind earthly things.* They are, like *Saul*, *hid among the stuff.* We should be as eagles, flying aloft towards heaven; and not as serpents, creeping upon the earth, and licking the dust.

2. The serpent is *deceitful*. The serpent useth many shifts, and glides so cunningly, that we cannot trace him. This was one of those four things which wise *Agur* could not find out, *the way of a serpent upon a rock*, *Prov.* xxx. 19. 'Tis a deceitful creature: we should not in this sense be like the serpent, for deceitfulness. Naturally we too much resemble the serpent for fraud and collusion, *Jer.* xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things.* 1st. Deceit towards man:

man: (1.) To dissemble *friendship*; to cover malice with pretences of love; to commend and censure, to flatter and hate; a *Judas kiss*, and a *Joab's sword*; *mel in ore, fel in corde*. (2.) To dissemble honesty; to pretend just dealing, yet use false weights.

2dly. Deceit to wards God: to draw nigh to God with the lips, and the heart is far from him; to serve God, and seek ourselves; to pretend to love God, and yet be in league with sin: we should not in this sense be like the serpent, deceitful, and given to shifts. O be upright! be what you seem to be: God loves plainness of heart, *Pf. li. 6*. The plainer the diamond is, the more it sparkles: the plainer the heart is, the more it sparkles in God's eye. What a commendation did Christ give *Nathanael*? *John i. 47. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.*

3. The serpent casts the coat, but another new coat comes in the room; in this we should not be like the serpent, to cast the coat, to cast off one sin, and another sin as bad come in the room. The drunkard leaves his drunkenness, because it impairs his health, his credit, his purse, and falls to the sin of cozenage; the prodigal leaves his prodigality, and turns usurer: this is as if one disease should leave a man, and he should fall into another as bad; his ague leaves him, and he falls into a consumption. O be not like the serpent, that casts one coat and another comes: this is like him in the gospel, that had one devil go out of him, and seven worse spirits came in the room, *Mat. xii. 45*.

4. The serpent is a venomous creature, it is full of poison, *Deut. xxxii. 24*. In this be not like the serpent. It is said of wicked men, their poison is like the *poison of a serpent*, *Pf. lviii. 4*. What is this poison? It is the poison of malice: malice is the devil's picture. Lust makes men brutish, and malice makes them devilish. Malice carries in it its own punishment; a malicious man, to hurt another, will injure himself. *Quintilian* speaks of one who had a garden of flowers, and he poisoned his flowers, that his neighbour's bees sucking from them might be poisoned, and die. Oh be not venomous like the serpent! malice is mental murder; you may kill a man, and never touch him, 1 *John iii. 15. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer*. Malice spoils all your good duties; the malicious man defiles his prayer, poisons the sacramental cup; he eats and drinks

his own damnation. I have read of one who lived in malice, and being asked how he could say the Lord's prayer? I leave out those words, *As we forgive them that trespass against us*. But *St. Austin* brings in God replying thus to him, *Because thou dost not say my prayer, therefore I will not hear thine*. The malicious man is not like to enjoy either earth or heaven: not the earth, for *the meek shall inherit the earth*, *Mat. v. 4*. Nor is he like to enjoy heaven, for *God will beautify the meek with salvation*, *Pf. cxlix. 4*. so that the malicious man is cut off both from earth and heaven.

5. The serpent is given to hissing: so it is said of the basilisk. In this be not like the serpent, to hiss out reproaches and invectives against the saints and people of God: they are the seed of the serpent that hiss at godliness. The Lord will one day reckon with men for all their *hard speeches*, *Jude xv*. *Lucian* was such an one who did hiss out and scoff against religion; and as a just judgment of God, he was afterwards torn in pieces by dogs.

6. The serpent stops her ear: it is an obstinate deafness, *Pf. lviii. 4. They are as the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ear*. In this be not like the serpent obstinately to stop your ears to the voice of God's word. While God calls you to repent of sin, be not as the basilisk to stop your ear, *Zechariah vii. 11. They refused to hearken, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear*. The word denounceth threatnings against sin; but many, instead of being like the *Publican*, smiting on their breast, they are as deaf adders, stopping their ears. If you shut your ear against God's word, take heed God doth not shut heaven against you: if God cries to you to repent, and you will not hear; when you cry for mercy, God will not hear, *Zechariah vii. 13. As he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts*.

7. The serpent casts her coat, but keeps her sting: in this sense be not like the serpent, to cast off the outward acts of sin, and keep the love of sin: he whose heart is in love with any sin, is an hypocrite. (1.) A man may forbear sin, yet retain the love of it: he may forbear the act of gross sin, *formaline poenae*, for fear of hell; as a man may forbear a dish he loves, for fear it should bring his disease upon him, the stone or gout. (2.) A man may forsake sin, yet keep the love of sin; he may forsake sin, either



out of policy or necessity. *1st.* Policy; vice will impair his health, eclipse his credit; therefore out of policy, he will forsake it: or, *2dly.* Necessity; perhaps he can follow the trade of sin no longer; the adulterer is grown old, the prodigal poor; either the purse fails or the strength. Thus a man may refrain the act of sin, yet retain the love of sin; this is like the serpent, which casts her coat, but keeps her sting. Oh take heed of this! herein be not like the serpent; remember that saying of Hierom, *gravius est peccatum diligere quam perpetrare*; it is worse to love sin than to commit it: a man may commit sin through a temptation, or out of ignorance; and when he knows it to be a sin, he is sorry for it; but he that loves sin, his will is in the sin and that aggravates it, and is like the dye, which makes the wool of a crimson-colour.

8. Serpents are chased away with *sweet perfumes*; the perfume of hearts-horn, or the sweet odour of the Styrax will drive the serpent, away. In this be not like the serpent, to be driven away with the sweet perfumes of holiness. Carnal hearts are for things only which delight the senses: they will discourse of news or traffic, here they are in their element; but let a man bring with him the sweet perfume of religious discourse, let him talk of Christ, or living by faith, this spiritual perfume drives them away: oh, be not in this like the serpent! how do you think to live with the saints in heaven, that cannot endure their company here? You hate the sweet *savour of their ointments*, the fragrant perfume of their graces.

9. The serpent (as is noted of the *Stellio*, a kind of serpent) he doth no sooner cast his skin, but he *eats it up again*: in this be not like the serpent to forsake sin, and then take it up again, *2 Pet. ii. 22.* It is happened according to the proverb, *The dog is returned to his vomit again*. Such were *Demas* and *Julian*. Many after a divorce, espouse their sins again; as if one's ague should leave him a while, and then come again: the devil seemed to be cast out, but comes the second time, and *the end of that man is worse than his beginning*, Luke xi. 24. because his sin is greater, he sins knowingly, and wilfully; and his damnation will be greater.

10. Serpents are great *lovers of wine*. Pliny, who writes the natural history, saith, *If serpents come where wine is, they drink insatiably*. In this be not like the serpent; though the scripture allows the use of wine, *1 Tim. v. 23.* yet

it forbids the excess, *Eph. v. 18. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.* Be not like the serpents in this, *lovers of wine*. Because this sin of drunkenness doth so abound in this age, I shall enlarge something more on this head! It is said of the old world, *They eat, they drank, till the flood came*, Luke xvii. 27. Drinking is not a sin, but the meaning is, they drank to intemperance, they disordered themselves with drink; and God let them have liquor enough, first they were drowned in wine, and then in water.

There is no sin which doth more deface God's image then drunkenness, it disguiseth a person, and doth even unman him; drunkenness makes him have the throat of a fish, the belly of a swine, and the head of an ass; drunkenness is the shame of nature, the extinguisher of reason, the ship-wreck of chastity, and the murder of conscience; drunkenness is hurtful for the body, the cup kills more than the cannon; it causeth dropies, catarrhs, apoplexies; drunkenness fills the eyes with fire, and the legs with water, and turns the body into an hospital: but the greatest hurt is that it doth to the soul; excess of wine breeds the worm of conscience. The drunkard is seldom reclaimed by repentance, and the ground of it is partly, because, by this sin, the senses are so enchanted, reason so impaired, and lust so inflamed; and partly, it is judicial, the drunkard being so besotted with this sin, God saith of him as of Ephraim, *Hos. iv. 17. Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone*; so, this man is joined to his cups, *let him alone*, let him drown himself in liquor, till he scorch himself in fire. How many woes hath God pronounced against his sin, *Isa. xxviii. 1. Wo to the drunkards of Ephraim! Joel i. 5. Howl, ye drinkers of wine! drunkenness excludes a person from heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 10. Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God: a man cannot go to heaven reeling.* King Solomon makes an oration full of invectives against this sin, *Prov. xxiii. 29. Who hath wo? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath redness of eyes? they that tarry long at the wine. Who hath contentions? Drink, when abused, breeds quarrels, it causeth duels. Who hath babbling? When one is in drink, his tongue runs, he will reveal any secrets of his friend. Who hath redness of eyes? Redness of eyes comes sometimes from weeping, but too often from drinking; and what is the issue? Ver. 32. At last, the wine bites like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.* The

The wine smiles in the glass, but stings in the conscience. Drunkenness is a sin against all the ten commandments. (1.) Drunkenness casts off the true God, *Hos. iv. 11. Wine takes away the heart*: it takes the heart off from God. (2.) It makes the belly a god, *Phil. iii. 19. To this the drunkard pours drink offerings*; there's a breach of the second commandment. (3.) The drunkard in his cups takes God's name in vain by his oaths. (4.) The drunkard makes no difference of days; he is seldom sober on a sabbath; he on that day worships *Bacchus*. (5.) The drunkard honours neither his natural father, nor the magistrate his civil father; he will be intemperate though the laws of the land forbid it. (6.) The drunkard commits murder. *Alexander* killed his friend *Clitus* when he was drunk, for whom he would have given half his kingdom when he was sober. (7.) The drunkard's wine provokes lust. *Austin* calls wine *fomentum libidinis*, the inflamer of lust. *Nunquam ego ebrium castum putavi*; I never did believe a drunken man to be chaste, saith *Hierom.* (8.) The drunkard is a thief; he spends that money upon his drunken lust, which should have been given to charitable uses; so he robs the poor. (9.) The drunkard is a slanderer; he cares not when he is on the ale-bench, how he doth defame and belye others; when he hath taken his full cups, he is now fit to take a false oath. (10.) The drunkard sins against the tenth commandment; for he covets to get another's estate by circumvention and extortion, that he may be the better able to follow his drunken trade. Thus he sins against the ten commandments.

If this sin of drunkenness be not reformed, I pray God the sword be not made drunk with blood. And whereas some will go to shift off this sin from themselves, that they are no drunkards, because they have not drunk away their reason and senses; they are not so far gone in drink that they cannot go: he is a drunkard in the scripture-sense, who 'is mighty to drink wine, *Isa. v. 22. He is a drunkard* (saith *Solomon*) *that tarries long at the wine*, *Prov. xxiii. 30. He who sits at it from morning to night, that drinks away his precious time*, though he doth not drink away his reason, he is a drunkard that drinks more than doth him good, and that, though he be not himself drunk, yet he makes another drunk, *Hab. ii. 15. Wo to him that gives his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunk.*

Oh! I beseech you, be not in this like the serpent, *lovers of wine*. This I fear is one cause why the word preached doth so little good on many in this city, they drink away sermons; they do as the hunted deer when it is wounded, runs to the water and drinks; so, when they have been at a sermon, and the arrow of reproof hath wounded their conscience, they run presently, and drink away those convictions; they sleep the sermon in wine. The tavern-bell doth more hurt, than the sermon-bell doth good. Thus you have seen wherein we should not be like serpents.

II. Wherein we should be like the serpent, and that is, in *prudence and wisdom*; be ye wise as serpents. The serpent is a most prudent creature, therefore the devil made use of the serpent to deceive our first parents, because it was such a subtil creature, *Gen. iii. 1. The serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field*. There is a natural wisdom and subtilty in every part of the serpent, and we should labour to imitate them, and be wise as serpents.

First, The serpent hath a subtilty in his eye, he hath a singular sharpness of sight; therefore, among the *Grecians*, a serpent's eye was a proverbial speech for one of a quick understanding; in this we should be like the serpent. Get the serpent's eye, have a quick insight into the mysteries of the christian religion. Knowledge is the beauty and ornaments of a christian, *Prov. xiv. 18. The prudent are crowned with knowledge*. Get the serpent's eye, be divinely illuminated. Faith, without knowledge, is presumption; zeal, without knowledge, is passion, *Prov. xix. 2. Without knowledge, the mind is not good*: for one to say he hath a good heart, who hath no knowledge, is as if one should say he hath a good eye, when he hath no sight. In this be like the serpent, of a quick understanding.

Secondly, The serpent hath a prudence and subtilty in his ear; the serpent will not be deluded with the voice of the charmer, but stops its ear: In this we must be wise as serpents, stop our ears to false teachers, who are the devil's charmers. (1.) We must stop our ears to *Arminian* teachers, who place the chief power in the will, as if that were the helm that turns about the soul in conversion, *1 Cor. iv. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another? Ego me ipsum discerno*, said *Grevinchovius*, I have made myself to differ. Be as the serpent, stop your ears to such doctrine. (2.) We must stop our ears to *Socinian* teachers, who raze



the foundation of all religion, and deny Christ's divinity. This the apostle calls *a damnable heresy*, 2 Pet. ii. (3) We must stop our ears to *Popish* teachers, who teach merit, indulgencies, transubstantiation; who teach that the pope is the head of the church, Christ is called the head of the church, *Eph. v. 23*. For the pope to be head is, to make the church monstrous, to have two heads; *Popish* teachers teach the people nonsense and blasphemy; they cause the people to pray without understanding, to obey without reason, to believe without sense: it is a damnable religion; therefore worshipping the beast, and drinking the cup of God's indignation are put together, *Rev. xiv. 9*. Oh! in this be *wise as serpents*, stop your ears to the charming of false teachers. God hath given his people this wisdom, to stop their ears to heretics, *John x. 5*. *A stranger will they not follow, but flee from him*.

*Thirdly*, the serpent hath a chief care to defend his head; a blow there is deadly: so in this we should be *wise as serpents*; our chief care should be to defend our head from error. The plague in the head is worst. Loose principles breed loose practices. If the head be tainted with erroneous opinions, that believers are free *a lege morali*; that there is no resurrection; that we may do evil that good may come of it; what sin will not this lead to? Or keep your head: error is a spiritual gangrene, 2 Tim. ii. 17. Which spreads, and, if not presently cured, is mortal. Heresies destroy the doctrine of faith, they rent the mantle of the church's peace, and eat out the heart of religion. The *Gnosticks*, as *Epiphanius* observes, did not only pervert the judgment of their proficients, but brought them at last to corporeal uncleanness; error damns as well as vice. Vice is like killing with a pistol, and error like killing with poison. O be *wise as serpents*, defend your head. *Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves*.

Our saviour Christ here commends to us the wisdom of the serpent, and the innocency of the dove. The elect are called *wise virgins*, Mat. xxv. 4. *Virgins*, there is the *dove*; *wise*, there is the *serpent*. We must have innocency with our wisdom, else our wisdom is but craftiness; and we must have wisdom with our innocency, else our innocency is but weakness. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not circumvent others; and we must have the wisdom of the serpent, that others may not cir-

cumvent us.

Doct. *Christians must be both wise and innocent*. This union of the dove and the serpent is hard to find, but it is possible; *Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, Acts vii. 22. there was the prudence of the serpent; and he was *meek above all the men upon the face of the earth*, Numb. xii. 3. there was the innocency of the dove. But the most famous instance of wisdom and innocency was in our Saviour: when the *Jews* came to him with an ensnaring question, *Mark xii. 14*. *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar or not?* Christ answers wisely, *v. 17*. *Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's*: deny not Cesar his civil right, nor God his religious worship; let your loyalty be mixed with piety: here he shewed the wisdom of the serpent. And would you see Christ's innocency? 1 Pet. ii. 22. *There was no guile found in his mouth*; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: he opened his mouth in praying for his enemies, but not in reviling them: behold here the innocency of the dove.

Two things I am to speak of; the *serpent*, and the *dove*.

### I. The Serpent.

Qu. *Wherein should we be like the serpent?*

Ans. In prudence and sagacity; *Be ye wise as serpents*. The serpent is the most prudent creature; therefore the devil made use of the serpent to deceive our first parents, *Gen. ii. 1*. *The serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field*. There is a natural wisdom and subtilty in every part of the serpent; and herein we should endeavour to imitate him; *Be wise as serpents*.

1. The serpent hath a subtilty in his eye: he hath a singular sharpness of sight: therefore among the *Grecians*, a *serpent's eye* was a proverbial speech for one of a quick understanding. In this we should be like the serpent, have a quick insight into the mysteries of the gospel. Get the serpent's eye, *Prov. x. 14*. *Wise men lay up knowledge*. Faith without knowledge is presumption, zeal without knowledge is frenzy.

2. The serpent hath a prudence and subtilty in his ear; the serpent will not be deluded with the voice of the charmer, but stops its ears: in this *be wise as serpents*; stop your ears from such as would discourage you from strict holy walking. Some inspired by Satan, would raise prejudices against the ways of God, that they are strewed with thorns of mortification and persecution:

persecution : if you will be religious, you must hang your *harps upon the willows*, and bid *adieu* to all joy, *Acts* xxviii. 22. *This sect is every where spoken against* : Oh, be wise as serpents ! Stop your ears to such as would discourage you from holy walking ; they are the devil's *charm-ers*. Godliness is the root on which all true joy grows ; solid joy, though not wanton, *Pf.* cxxxviii. 5. *Yea they shall sing in the ways of the Lord.* *Acts* ix. 31. If we leave God, whether shall we go ? When *Saul* left God, he went to the witch of *Endor*, *1 Sam.* xxviii. 8.

3. The serpent hath a subtilty in its wings : for naturalists report, such serpents are found in *Ethiopia*, as have wings ; and the scripture mentions a fiery flying serpent, *Isa.* xiv. 29. which wings denote the subtilty of the serpent in the hasty prosecution of his prey : in this be like the Serpent, in having winged desires after heavenly objects. Desire is the wing of the soul, which sets it a-flying : haste after ordinances, they are *pabulum animæ*, the food of the soul ; flee to them with appetite. Get the Serpent's wing, *Pf.* cxxii. 1. *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord.* We know not how long we shall enjoy the blessings of the sanctuary : when manna was to cease on the seventh day, the people of *Israel* gathered twice as much on the sixth. If we have the wisdom from *above*, we shall neglect no season wherein we may get the bread of life broken to us.

4. Serpents have a subtilty and prudence in their drinking ; before they drink, *expuunt venenum*, they cast up their poison. In this we should be wise as serpents ; before we come to ordinances, we should cast up the poison of sin by repentance. If a man takes *opium* or *mercury*, a cordial will do him no good : So, as long as men feed on their sins, ordinances will do them no good ; nay, much hurt ; they eat and drink their own damnation. In this therefore let us be wise as serpents, cast up the poison of sin, before we come to drink up the waters of the sanctuary.

5. The Serpent hath a subtilty in his whole body, which he wraps together like a circle to defend his head ; a blow on his head is deadly, and his chief policy is to safe-guard his head : in this let us learn of the Serpent, our chief care should be to defend our head from error ; the apostle calls them *damnable heresies*, *2 Pet.* ii. 1. they destroy the doctrine of faith, rend the coat of the church's peace, and eat out the heart of religion. Let us, as the Serpent, defend our

head ; let us keep our head from *Socinian* opinions, who deny the Deity of Christ ; from *popish* opinions, merit, image-worship, transubstantiation : *papists* cause the people to pray without understanding, to obey without reason, to believe against sense. Have a care to defend your head from being tainted with popish aphorisms. Thus you see wherein we should be like the Serpent, in prudence and sagacity.

II. The second thing I am to speak of is the dove : be harmless as a dove. The dove is an excellent creature ; it was so acceptable, that in the old law, God would have the dove offered in sacrifice : the holy Ghost, when he would appear in a visible shape, assumed the likeness of a dove, *Mat.* iii. 16. We should be as doves in three respects ; I. In respect of *Meekness* ; II. In respect of *Innocency* ; III. In respect of *Purity*.

I. In respect of *Meekness*. The dove is the emblem of meekness ; 'tis *sine felle*, without gall : we should be as doves for meekness ; we must avoid unruly passion, which is *brevis infania*, a short frenzy ; we must be without the gall of bitterness and revenge ; we must be of mild spirits, *praying for our enemies* : So *Stephen*, *Acts* vii. 60. *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* This dove-like meekness is the best jewel and ornament we can wear, *1 Pet.* iii. 4. *The ornament of a meek spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.* Passion doth disguise, meekness adorns.

II. We should be as doves for *innocency*.

The innocency of the dove is seen in two things. (1.) Not to deceive. (2.) Not to hurt.

1. Not to deceive. The dove is, as without gall, so without guile ; it doth not deceive or ly at the catch : thus we should be as the dove, without fraud and craft. There is the holy simplicity commendable, *Rom.* xvi. 19. *I would have you simple concerning evil* ; to be a bungler at sin, not to have the art to beguile, this is a good simplicity ; as *Nathanael*, *in whose spirit there is no guile*, *John* i. 42. Where almost is this dove-like innocency to be found ? We live in an age, wherein there are more foxes than doves : persons are full of guile, they study nothing but fallacies, that one knows not how to deal with them, *Pf.* xxi. 2. *With a double heart do they speak.*

Not to hurt. The dove *rostro non lœdit*, the dove hath no horns or talons to hurt, only wings to defend itself by flight : other creatures



are commonly well armed; the lion hath its paw, the bear its tusk, the stag its horns; but the dove is a most harmless creature, it hath nothing wherewith to offend: thus we should be as doves for *harmlessness*; we should not do wrong to others, but rather suffer wrong. Such a dove was *Samuel*, 1 Sam. xii. 3. *Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?* He did not get mens estates into his hands, or raise himself upon the ruins of others. How rare is it to find such doves? Sure they are flown away. *How many birds of prey are there?* Micah vii. 2. *They all ly in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with a net*; these are not doves, but vultures; *they travail with mischief, and are in pain till they bring forth.*

III. We should be as doves for purity. The dove is the emblem of purity; it loves the purest air, it feeds on pure grain; the raven feeds on the carcase, but the dove feeds pure. Thus let us be as doves for sanctity, *Cleansing ourselves from all pollution both of flesh and spirit*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Christ's dove is pure, *Cant.* v. 2. *My dove, my undefiled.* Let us keep pure among dregs, 1 Tim. v. 22. *Keep thyself pure.* Better have a rent in the flesh, than an hell in the conscience; the dove is a chaste, pure creature; let us be doves for purity.

*Use 1.* See here the nature of a good christian; he is wise and innocent: he hath so much of the serpent, that he doth not forfeit his discretion; and so much of the dove, that he doth not defile his conscience. A godly man is looked upon by a *carnal eye*, as weak and indiscreet, as having something of the dove, but nothing of the serpent; to believe things not seen, to choose sufferings rather than sin, this is counted folly; but the world is mistaken in a believer, he hath his eyes in his head; he knows what he doth; he is prudent, as well as holy; he is wise that finds the *pearl of price*; he is wise that provides for eternity; he is the wisest man that hath wit to save his soul; he is wise that makes him his friend, who shall be his judge. The godly man acts both the *politician* and the *divine*; he retains his ingenuity, yet he doth not part with his integrity.

*Use 2. Reproof.* It reproves them who have too much of the serpent, but nothing of the dove, *Jer.* iv. 22. *Wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge*: these are like the devil, who retains his subtilty, but not his innocency. We have many in this age like the Ser-

pent for craftiness, *Dan.* viii. 25. *Through policy he shall cause craft to prosper.* Men have the head-piece of subtilty, but want the breast-plate of honesty; they are wise to contrive sin, to forge plots, to study compliance, rather than conscience: the port they aim at, is preferment; the compass they sail by, is policy; the pilot that steers them, is Satan. These have the craftiness of the serpent; *They are wise to do evil.*

2. They are like the Serpent for mischief. You know the *fiery serpents* did sting *Israel*: these have the sting of the serpent; they have a sting in their tongues, stinging the people of God with bitter slanders and invectives, calling them factious and seditious; and they sting with their indictments and excommunications, *Gal.* iv. 29. Such stinging serpents were *Nero*, *Dio-clesian*, and *Julian*; and their *spirit is yet alive* in the world. These have too much of the serpent in them, but nothing of the dove, 2 Pet. ii. 3. *Their damnation flumbereth not.*

*Use 3. Exhortation.* To put in practice our Saviour's counsel in the text, join the serpent and the dove together, wisdom and holiness: here lies the knot; this is the great difficulty, to unite these two together, the serpent and the dove, prudence and innocency; if you separate these two, you spoil all.

*Qu. Wherein doth a christian join these two together, the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness?*

*Ans.* This I shall answer in 12 particulars.

1. To be wise and innocent consists in this, to be sensible of an injury, yet not revenge it. A christian is not a stoic, nor yet a fury: he is so wise, that he knows when an injury is done him; but so holy, that he knows how to pass it by: this is a most excellent temper of soul; I had almost said, angelical. As the wind doth allay the heat of the air, so grace doth allay the heat of revenge. *Moses* herein shewed a mixture of the serpent and the dove: *Miriam* murmured against him, *Numb.* xii. 2. *Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses?* is he the only prophet to declare God's mind to us? *Moses* was so wise, as to discern her pride, and slighting of him; yet so meek as to bury the injury: when God struck her with leprosy, he prays for her, *Numb.* xii. 13. *Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.* And upon his prayer, she was cured of her leprosy. A good christian hath so much wisdom as to discern his enemy's malice, but so much grace as to conquer his own: he knows

it is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression, *Prov. xix. 11.* Tho' a christian hath so much prudence as to vindicate himself, yet so much goodness as not to avenge himself. Behold here the serpent and the dove united, sagacity and innocence.

2. The mixing wisdom and innocence is seen in this, to be humble, but not base. Humility is part of the dove's innocence, *1 Pet. v. 5. Be ye clothed with humility.* St. Paul, though the chief of the apostles, calls himself *the least of saints.*

A gracious soul hath low thoughts of himself, and carries himself lowly toward others; but, though he be humble, he is not base; though he will not saucily resist his superiors, he will not sinfully humour them; though he will not do such proud actions as to make his enemies hate him, yet he will not do such sordid actions as to make them despise him: here is the serpent and the dove united.

A good christian is so humble as to oblige others, but not so unworthy as to disobey God. St. Paul, as far as he could with a good conscience, did *become all things to all, that he might save some,* *1 Cor. ix. 20. 22.* But he would not break a commandment to gratify any. When God's glory lay at stake, who more resolute than Paul? *Gal. ii. 5.* The three children were humble, they gave the king his title of honour; but they were not sordidly timorous, *Dan. iii. 18. Be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods.* Though they shewed reverence to the king's person, yet no reverence to the image he had set up. A good christian will not do any thing below himself; though he is for obeying of laws, yet he will not prostitute himself to mens lusts. He is humble, there he shews the innocence of the dove; but not base, there he shews the wisdom of the serpent.

3. The prudence of the serpent, and innocence of the dove, is seen in this, to *reprove the sin, yet love the person.* We are commanded to reprove, *Lev. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.* Not to reprove sin, is to approve it; but this sword of reproof is a dangerous weapon, if it be not well handled: to reprove, and yet love, is to act both the serpent and the dove.

Q<sup>U</sup>ESTION. *How may a christian so reprove sin, as to shew love to the person?*

ANS. 1. In taking a fit season to reprove

another; that is, when his anger is over: as, when God did rebuke Adam, he came to him *in the cool of the day,* *Gen. iii. 8.* So, when we are to reprove any, we are to come to them when their spirits are more cool, and fit to receive a reproof. To reprove a man when he is in a passion, is to give strong water in a fever; it doth more hurt than good. By observing a fit season, we shew both prudence and holiness; we discover as well discretion as affection.

2. Reproving sin, so as to shew love to the person, is seen in this, when, though we tell him plainly of his sin, yet it is in mild, not provoking words, *2 Tim. ii. 25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* Peter tells the jews plainly of their sin in crucifying Christ, but useth suaves and gospel lenitives, to allure and encourage them to believe, *Acts ii. 23. Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified.* *v. 38. Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin: for the promise is to you, and to your children.* Reproof is a bitter pill, and hard to swallow, therefore we must dip it in sugar; use those sweet mollifying expressions, that others may see love coming along with the reproof. David compares reproof to oil, *Ps. cxli. 5.* Oil supplies the joints when they are hard and stiff; our reproofs being mixed with the oil of compassion, they work most kindly, and do most soften stiff, obdurate hearts.

3. Reproving sin, yet love to the person, is when the end of our reproof is not to *revile* him, but to *reclaim* him. While we go to heal mens consciences, we must take heed of wounding their names. The chirurgeon, in opening a vein, shews both skill and love; skill in not cutting an artery; and love, in letting out the bad blood: here is the mixing the serpent and the dove; the wisdom of the serpent is seen, in not reproaching the sinner; the innocence of the dove is seen in reclaiming him from sin.

4. Prudence and holiness is seen in this, to *know what we should do, and do what we know.* To know what we should do, there is the wisdom of the serpent; to do what we know, there is the innocence of the dove, *John xiii. 17.* Knowledge is a jewel adorns him that wears it; it is the enriching and bespangling of the mind; knowledge is the eye of the soul, to guide it in the right way: but this knowledge must be joined with holy practice: to separate practice from knowledge, is to separate the dove from the



*the serpent.* Many illuminated heads can discourse fluently in matters of religion, but they do not live up to their knowledge; this is to have good eyes, but to have the feet cut off: They know they should not break the sabbath, they should not defame or defraud; but they do not practise what they know; here they separate the dove from the serpent, virtue from knowledge. How vain is knowledge without practice! as if one should know a sovereign medicine and not apply it. Satan is a knowing spirit, he hath enough of the serpent: but that which makes him a devil is, he wants the dove, he doth not practise holiness.

5. To mix the serpent and dove, is to keep two trades going. To understand worldly affairs, there is the wisdom of the serpent; yet not neglect the soul, there is the innocency of the dove. God hath said, *six days shalt thou labour*, Exod. xx. 9. Religion did never grant a patient to idleness; there is a lawful care to be had about secular things; to have insight into one's calling is a commendable wisdom, but with this wisdom joyn the dove's innocency: so follow your calling, as not to neglect your soul. The soul is a precious thing, it would beggar the angels to give half the price of a soul. Our greatest care should be to get grace. While you put gold in your bag, do not forget to put oil in your vessel. Trade beyond the *East-Indies*: drive a trade of holiness. *This merchandice is better than the merchandice of silver*, Prov. iii. 14. Live in a calling, but especially live by faith; look to the providing for your families, but especially to the saving of your souls. The soul is the angelical part, the loss of this can never be made up again. God (saith *Chrysostom*) hath given a man two eyes; if he lose one, he hath another: but he hath but one soul; if he lose that, it is irrecoverable, it can never be made up again. O unite the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness; *use* the world, but *love* your soul; trade on earth, but beware of breaking in your trade for heaven. How many part these two, the serpent and the dove? They are wise for the world, but fools for their souls. It is too often seen, that men pull down their souls to build up an estate.

6. To join the serpent and the dove, prudence and innocency, consists in this, to know how to *give counsel*, and how to *keep counsel*. He hath the wisdom of the serpent, that can give counsel; he knows how to advise another in difficult cases, and speak a word in due season,

2 Sam. xvi. 23. *The counsel of Achitophel was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God.* But this is not enough to have the wisdom of the serpent, in being able to give counsel; but there must be the innocency of the dove too, in keeping counsel. If a man's secret be imparted to us (unless in case of blood) we are not to reveal it. A friend is *alter idem*, as one's own soul, Deut. xii. 6. and what he imparts of his heart, should be kept under lock and key, Prov. xxv. 9. *Discover not a secret to another, lest he that hear thee, put thee to shame, &c.* To disclose a friend's secrets, though it be not treason, it is treachery, it is most unchristian: a word may be spoken in secret, which when it is trumpeted out, may occasion quarrels or law-suits. He that cannot keep a matter committed to him, is like a vessel that runs out, or a sick stomach that cannot keep the meat, but brings it up again. He that publisheth his friend's secret, doth publish his own shame.

7. To mix these two, prudence and holiness, is to *know the seasons* of grace, and *improve* them: to know the seasons of grace, there is the *wisdom of the serpent*. It is wisdom in the husbandman to know the fit time for pruning of trees, sowing of seed; so it is no less wisdom to know the golden seasons of grace: while we hear the joyful sound, while we have praying hours, while the spirit of God blows on our hearts, here is a gale for heaven. The day of grace will not always last; the shadows of the evening seem to be stretched out; things look as if the gospel tended a-pace to a sun-setting: be *wise as serpents*, to know what a prize is put in your hands. And with the serpent join the dove, that is, in *improving the seasons* of grace. The *stork* and *turtle* not only know their season but improve it; they approach to the warmer climate against the spring, saith *Pliny*. Here is the serpent and dove united, knowing and improv'g the day of grace: when we profit by ordinances, when we mix the word with faith, when an ordinance hath stamped holiness upon us, as the seal leaves its print upon the wax; this is to improve the seasons of grace.

8. The serpent and the dove, wisdom and innocency, is to be *moderate* yet *zealous*. Moderation is good in some cases, Phil. iv. 5. *Let your moderation be known to all.*

*First*, Moderation is good in case of *anger*. When the passions are up, moderation sits as queen

queen and governess in the soul; it allays the heat of passion. Moderation is *fraenum irae*, the bridle of anger.

Secondly, Moderation is good in case of law-suits; so the *Greek* word for moderation, is properly taken. If there be a dispute in law between us and others, we are not to take the extremity of the law, but use Christian equity and mildness; nay, for peace's sake, *cedere de jure*, rather part with some of our right, than oppress them: this much honours the gospel.

Thirdly, Moderation is good in things indifferent. Things ought not to be rigorously imposed in God's worship, which are not of divine injunction: God never made governors of the church to be like pilots of a ship, to steer mens consciences which way they please. Moderation and christian forbearance, in things indifferent, would much tend to the peace and unity of the church. All this moderation is commendable, and shows the wisdom of the serpent; but remember to join the dove with the serpent: we must so exercise moderation, as withal to cherish zeal. St. Paul in some things was moderate, he did not press *circumcision*, Acts xv. 25. he was tender of laying a yoke upon the consciences of the disciples; but he had zeal with his moderation, when he saw their idolatry at *Athens*, the fire of his zeal broke forth, Acts xvii. 16. *His spirit was stirred in him*. It was good advice Calvin gave to Melancthon, that he should not so affect the name of moderate, as to lose all his zeal. To be cool and silent when God's blessed truths are undermined or adulterated, is not moderation, but luke-warmness, which is to God a most hateful temper, Rev. iii. 15. *I would you were cold or hot*; and any thing but luke-warm. This is to shew prudence and holiness, when we are moderate, yet zealous.

9. To unite serpent and dove, consists in this, when we defend the truth by argument and adorn it by life: defending the truth is the serpent's wisdom; an intelligent Christian can convince gainfayers. This wisdom of the serpent was eminently in Stephen, Acts vi. 9. *There arose certain of the synagogue, disputing with Stephen, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake*. We read in the acts and monuments of the church, John Fryth martyr, being opposed by three papists, he, like another Hercules, fighting with all three at once, did by his wisdom, so convince them, that one of them turned

from popery, and became a zealous protestant. Herein is the wisdom of the serpent, not only to love them that profess the truth, but silence them that oppose it. But with this wisdom of the serpent, there must be joined the innocency of the dove; together with defending the truth by argument, there must be adorning it by life, Tit. ii. 10. *That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*. There are some who can dispute for the truth, but disgrace it by their bad living: this is to act both the serpent and the dove, when we not only plead for the truth; like Nazianzen, of whom it was said, he did thunder in his doctrine, and lighten in his conversation.

10. The uniting the serpent and the dove, is to be serious in religion, yet cheerful. Seriousness puts the heart in an holy frame, it fixeth it on God. Seriousness is to the soul, as ballast to the ship, it keeps the soul from being overturned with vanity; the heart is ever best when it is serious. But this seriousness in religion must be mixed with cheerfulness; cheerfulness conduceth to health, Prov. xvii. 22. It honours religion, it proclaims to the world we serve a good master, cheerfulness is a friend to grace, it puts the heart in tune to praise God, Ps. lxxi. 21. Uncheerful christians, like the spies, bring an evil report on the good land: others suspect there is something unpleasant in religion, that they who profess it hang their harps upon the willows, and walk so dejectedly. Be serious, yet cheerful, Phil. iv. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord always*. Why was Christ anointed, but to give the oil of joy for mourning? Isa. xvi. 1. *Joy is as well a fruit of the spirit, as faith*, Gal. v. 22. One way of grieving the spirit (saith Heinsius) is by christians uncheerful walking: if you would render the gospel lovely, mix the dove and the serpent; be serious, yet cheerful in God.

11. The uniting of the serpent and the dove, wisdom and holiness consists in this when we so lay up as we lay out. It is a duty to provide for our charge, 1 Tim. v. 8. *If any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel*. To lay up for our family, here's the wisdom of the serpent, but we must lay out for the poor too, here's the mixture of the dove, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *Charge them that are rich in the world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works*. The poor man is as it were an altar, if we bring our alms and lay upon it, with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Faith,

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though



though it hath sometimes a trembling hand, it must not have a withered hand, but must stretch forth itself to works of mercy; there's nothing lost by charitableness, *Prov. xi. 25. The liberal soul shall be made fat. Ps. xli. 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* While men do so remember their family, that they do not forget the poor, they show both prudence and piety; they unite the serpent and the dove.

12. The serpent's wisdom and the dove's innocency is seen in this, so to avoid danger, as not to commit sin; to preserve our liberty, yet keep our integrity. There's a sinful escaping danger, namely, when we are called to suffer for the truth, and we decline it, but there's an escaping danger without sin; as thus, when we do not betray ourselves into the enemies hands by rashness, nor yet betray the truth by cowardice, we have a pattern of this in our Saviour; he avoided his enemies in one place, that he might preach the gospel in another, *Luke iv.*

30. *They brought him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong; but he passing through the midst of them, went his way:* there was Christ's wisdom in not betraying himself to his enemy: and *v. xliii. I must preach to other cities also;* there was his holiness. Christ's securing of himself, was in order to the preaching of the gospel. This is to mix prudence and innocency, when we so avoid danger, as we do not commit sin.

Thus I have, as briefly and as clearly as I could, shown you how we must unite these two, the serpent and the dove, *prudence and holiness*: for want of coupling these two together religion doth much suffer in the christian world. *What Christ hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* Observe these two, *prudence and holiness*; here is the serpent's eye in the dove's head. When these two, *wisdom and innocency* (like *Castor and Pollux*) appear together, they presage much good and happiness that will befall a christian.

## WHO ARE IN CHRIST, ARE NEW CREATURES.

2 COR. V. 17. *Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.*

IN this scripture consists the essence and soul of religion.

I note here two things.

1. Doctr. *That the true definition of a christian is to be in Christ.*

*If any man be in Christ.* He may be in the church visible, yet not in Christ: it is not to be baptized into Christ's name, makes a true christian; but to be in Christ, that is to be grafted into him by faith. And if to be in Christ makes a Christian, then there are but few Christians: Many are in Christ nominally, not really; they are in Christ by profession, not by mystical union. Are they in Christ that do not know him? Are they in Christ who persecute them that are in Christ? Sure such an holy head as Christ will disclaim such spurious members.

2. Doctr. *That whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature.*

For illustration, I shall shew, I. What a new creature is: II. What kind of work it is.

I. What a new creature is: it is a second birth added to the first, *John iii. 3.* It may be

thus described; it is a supernatural work of God's spirit, renewing and transforming the heart into the divine likeness.

1. The efficient cause of the new creature, is the Holy Ghost; no angel or archangel is able to produce it. Who but God can alter the hearts of men, and turn stones into flesh? If the new creature were not produced by the Holy Ghost, then the greatest glory in a man's conversation would belong to himself; but this glory God will not give to another. The turning of the will to God, is from God, *Jer. xxxi. 19. After I was turned, I repented.*

2. The organical cause, or instrument by which the new creature is formed, is the word of God, *James i. 18. Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.* The word is the seed, out of which springs the flower of the new creature.

3. The matter, of which the new creature consists, is the restoring God's image lost by the fall.

Qu. But

*Qu. But doth God in the new creature, give a new soul?*

*Ans.* No; he doth not bestow new faculties, but new qualities. As is in the altering of a lute, the strings are not new, but the tune is mended; so, in the new creature, the substance of the soul is not new, but is new tuned by grace: the heart, that before was proud, is now humble; the eyes, that before were full of lust, are now full of tears. Here are new qualities infused.

II. What kind of work the new creature is.

*1st.* The new creature is a work of divine power; so much it imports, because it is a creation. The same power which raised Christ from the grave, goes to the production of the new creature, *Eph. i. 20*. It was a work of greater power to produce the new creature, than to make a world. It is true, in respect of God, all things are alike possible to him: but, as to our apprehension, it requires a greater power to make a new creature, than to make a world: For,

1. When God made the world, he met with no opposition; but when God is about to make a new creature, he meets with opposition; Satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him.

2. It cost God nothing to make the world, but to make the new creature costs him something: Christ himself was fain to become man. In making the world, it was but speaking a word; but in making of the new creature, it cost Christ the shedding of his blood.

3. God made the world in six days; but he is carrying on the new creature in us all our lives long. The new creature is but begun here, it is not perfected or drawn in all its orient colours till it come to heaven.

*2dly,* The new creature is a work of free-grace. There is nothing in us to move God to make us anew; by nature we are full of pollution and enmity, yet now God forms the new creature. Behold the banner of love displayed! The new creature may say, *By the grace of God I am what I am*. In the creation we may see the strength of God's arm, in the new creature we may see the working of God's bowels. That God should consecrate any heart, and anoint it with grace, is an act of pure love: that he should pluck one out of the state of nature and not another, must be resolved into free-grace, *Mat. xi. 26*. *Epen so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* This will increase the saints triumphs in heaven, that the lot of

free-grace should fall upon them, and not on others.

*3dly,* The new creature is a work of rare excellency. A natural man is a lump of earth and sin, God clothes him, *Zech. xi. 8*. but upon the new creature is a spiritual glory, as if we should see a piece of clay turned into a sparkling diamond, *Cant. iii. 16*. *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?* That is the natural man coming out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the spirit. The new creature must needs be glorious, for it *partakes of the divine nature*, *2 Pet. i. 4*. A soul beautified with holiness, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. It is God's lesser heaven, *Isa. lvii. 15*. In the incarnation, God made himself in the image of man; in the new creation, man is made in the image of God; by our being creatures, we are the sons of Adam; by being new creatures, we are the members of Christ. Reason makes one live the life of a man, the new creature makes him live the life of God: a new creature excels the rational nature, and equals the angelical. It is excellent to hear of Christ's being crucified for us, but more excellent to have Christ formed in us.

Concerning the new creature, I shall lay down two positions.

*1st. Posit.* That it is not in the power of a natural man to convert himself; because it is a new creation. As we cannot make ourselves creatures, so not new creatures.

*Qu. But why doth God command us to convert ourselves, if we have no power?* *Ezek. xviii. 31.* *Make you a new heart?*

*Ans.* 1. We once had power. God gave us a stock of holiness, but we lost it. If a master give his servant money to employ in his service, and he wastes and imbezils it, may not the master require the money of him? Though we have lost our power to obey, God hath not lost his right to command.

2. Though men cannot convert themselves, and make themselves new creatures, yet they may do more than they do in a tendency to it; they may avoid temptations, they may read the word; the same feet that carry them to a play, will carry them to a sermon; they may implore divine grace: but they do not what they are able; they do not improve the power of nature to the utmost, and put God to the trial whether he will give grace.



3. God is not wanting to them who seek to him for grace. *Deus volentibus non deest*: he is willing to put to his helping hand. With his command there goes a promise, *Ezek. xviii. 31. Make you a new heart*; and there is a promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you*.

2d. *Posit*. When God converts a sinner, he doth more than use a moral persuasion.

For conversion is a new creation, *Eph. iv. 24. The Pelagians* talk much of free-will, they say, *the will of man is by nature asleep, and conversion is nothing but the awaking a sinner out of sleep, which is done by moral persuasion*. But *man is by nature dead in sin*, *Eph. ii. 1*. And God must do more than awaken him, he must enliven him before he be a new creature.

1st. *Use*. Terror to such as are not new creatures. Such as are still growing upon the stock of old *Adam*, who continue in their sins, and are resolved so to do, these are in the *gall of bitterness*, and are the most miserable creatures that ever God made, except the devils. These stand in the place where all God's arrows fly; these are the centre where all God's curses meet. An unregenerate person is like one in debt, that is in fear to be arrested; he is every hour in fear to be arrested by death, and carried prisoner to hell. Can that traitor be happy, who is fed by his prince in prison, only to be kept alive for execution? God feeds the wicked as prisoners, they are reserved for the day of wrath, *2 Pet. ii. 9*. How should this fright men out of their natural condition, and make them restless till they are new creatures.

2d. *Use, trial*. Whether we are new creatures; our salvation depends upon it.

I. *I shall shew you the counterfeits of the new creature, or that which seems to be the new creature, and is not*.

1st. Counterfeit, natural honesty, moral virtue, prudence, justice, liberality, temperance; these make a glorious show in the eye of the world, but differ as much from the new creature, as a meteor from a star. Morality indeed is commendable, and it were well if there were more of it; this our Saviour loves, *Mark x. 21. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him*. It was a love of compassion, not election. Morality is but nature at best, it doth not amount to grace. (1.) There is nothing of Christ in morality; and that fruit is sower which grows not on the root Christ. (2.) Moral actions are done out of a vain-glorious humour, not

any respect to God's glory. The apostle calls the heathen magistrates, unjust, *1 Cor. vi. 1*. While they were doing justice in their civil courts, they were unjust: their virtues became vices, because faith was wanting, and they did all to raise them trophies for their own praise and fame. So that morality is but the wild olive of nature, it doth not amount to grace. Heat water to the highest degree, you cannot make wine of it, it is water still; so, let morality be raised to the highest, it is nature still; it is but old *Adam* put in a better dress. I may say to a civil man, *yet lackest thou one thing*, *Mark x. 21*. Moral virtue may stand with the hatred of godliness. A moral man doth as much hate holiness, as he doth vice. The *Stoicks* were moralists, and had sublime notions about virtue, yet were the deadliest enemies *St. Paul* had, *Acts xvii. 18*. So that this is a counterfeit jewel.

2d. Religious education is not the *new creature*. Education doth much cultivate and refine nature: education is a good wall to plant the vine of grace against, but it is not grace. King *Joash* was good as long as his uncle *Jehoiada* lived; but when *Jehoiada* died, all *Joash* his religion was buried in his uncle's grave, *2 Kings xii. 2*. Have not we seen many who have been trained up religiously under their parents, and were very hopeful, yet these fair blossoms of hope have been blown off, and they have lived to be a shame to their friends?

3d. A form of godliness is not the *new creature*. Every bird that hath fine feathers, hath not sweet flesh; all that shine with the golden feathers of profession, are not saints, *2 Tim. iii. 5*. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power. What is a lifeless form? Formality is the ape of piety: formalists may perform all the external parts of religion; pray, fast, give alms. Whatever duties a believer doth in sincerity, the same may a formalist do in hypocrisy. How devout were the Pharisees? How humble was *Ahab*? what a reformer was *Jehu*? Yet this was but a formal show of religion. *Daedalus*, by art, made images to move of themselves, insomuch that people thought they were living: formalists do so counterfeit, and play a devotion, that others think they are living saints: they are religious mountebanks.

4th. Every change of opinion doth not amount to the new creature: man may change from error to truth, yet no new creature; here is a change in the head, but not in the heart: one

one may be orthodox in his judgment, yet not cordially embrace the gospel; he may be no papist, yet no true believer. He who is changed only in opinion, is but almost a christian, and shall be but almost saved.

5th. Every sudden passion, or stirring of the affections, is not the new creature. There may be affections of sorrow: some, upon the reading the history of Christ's passion, may be ready to weep; but it is only a natural tenderness, which relents at any tragical sight. Affections of desire may be stirred, *John vi. Lord, evermore give us this bread*: but these basely deserted Christ, and would walk no more with him, ver. 66. Many desire heaven, but will not come up to the price. Affections of joy may be stirred: in the parable, the second sort of hearers are said to *receive the word with joy*, Mat. xii. 20. What was this but to have the affections moved with delight in hearing? Yet, that this did not amount to the new creature, is plain, 1. because those hearers are said to have no root. 2. Because they fell away, ver. 21. king Herod did hear *John Baptist* gladly; he was much affected with *John's* preaching: Where then was the defect? Why was not Herod a new creature? The reason was, because Herod was not reformed by the *baptist's* preaching, his affections were moved, but his sin was not removed. Many have *sweet motions of heart*, and seem to be much affected with the word, but their love to sin is stronger than their love to the world; therefore all their good affections prove abortive, and come to nothing.

6th. One may have trouble for sin, yet not be a new creature. Trouble of spirit may appear, while God's judgments ly upon men; when these are removed, their trouble ceaseth. *Pf. lxxviii. 34. When he slew them then they sought him, nevertheless they did flatter him with their lips.* Metal that melts in a furnace, take it out of the furnace, and it returns to its former hardness: many in time of sickness seek to be like *melted metal*: what weeping and wringing of hands? What confessions of sin will they make? Do not these look like new creatures? But as soon as they recover, they are as bad as ever; their pangs go off again, and it never comes to a new birth.

7th. A man may have the spirit, yet not be a new creature. The apostle supposeth a case, that one might be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, yet fall away, *Heb. vi. 4.* A man may have some slight transient work of the spirit,

but it doth not go to the root; he may have the *common gifts* of the spirit, but not the *special grace*; he may have the spirit to convince him, not to convert him: the light he hath is like a *winter sun*, which hath little or no influence, it doth not make him more holy; he hath the motions of the spirit, but walks after the flesh.

8th. Every abstaining from sin is not the new creature. This abstaining may be. (1.) From restraining grace, not renewing grace: as God withheld *Laban* from hurting *Jacob*, Gen. xxxi. 24. The Lord may restrain men from sin, by the terror of a natural conscience. Conscience stands as the angel with a drawn sword, and saith, *do not this evil*. Men may be frightened from sin, but not divorced. (2.) Men may abstain from sin for a while, and then return to it again; as *Saul* left off pursuing *David* for some time, and then hunted him again. This is like a man that holds his breath under water, and then takes breath again, *Jer. xxxiv. 15, 16. Ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight: but ye turned and polluted my holy name.* (3.) Men may leave sin partially; abstain from some sins, not all; they feed some sin in a corner. Herod left many sins, but one sin he lived in, viz. incest. All this doth not amount to the new creature.

II. I shall shew you wherein the essence of the new creature consists,

1st, In general. To the constituting of the new creature, there must be a great change wrought. He who is a new creature, is not the same man he was. *Alter idem.* He is of another spirit. *Numb. xiv. 24. My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit.* When the harlot *Lais* came to one of her old acquaintance after he was converted, and tempted him to sin, *ego non sum ego*, saith he, *I am not the same man.*

When one becomes a new creature, there is such a visible change, that all may see it; therefore it is called a change from *darkness to light*, Acts xxvi. 18. *Paul* a persecuter, when converted, was so altered, that all who saw him, wondered at him, and could scarce believe that he was the same body. *Mary Magdalene*, an unchast sinner, when once savingly wrought upon, what a penitent creature did she become? Her eyes that were enticements to lust, she takes penance of them, and washed Christ's feet with her tears: her hair which she was so proud of, and which was a net to entangle her lovers, she now takes penance of it,

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and wipes Christ's feet with it. Thus the new creature makes a visible change. Such as are the same as they were, as vain and proud as ever, here is no new creature to be seen; for then a mighty change would appear, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *And such were some of you, but ye are sanctified, &c.*

But every change doth not evidence the new creature. (1.) There is a change from one extreme to another, from a prodigal to an usurer; from a *turk* to a *papist*. This is as if one should recover of one disease, and die of another. (2.) There is an outward change, which is like the washing of a swine. *Ahab* was much changed to outward view, when he *rent his cloaths, and put on sackcloth*, 1 Kings xxi. 27. insomuch that God stands and wonders at him: *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself*: Yet, for all this, he was but an hypocrite.

Qu. *What change then is that which is requisite in the new creature?*

Ans. It is an inward change, a change of heart. Though the heart be not *new made*, it is *new-moulded*; Jer. iv. 14. *Wash thy heart, O Jerusalem*. *Ahab's cloaths* were rent, but not his heart. The outward change will do no good without the inward: what will become of them then, who have not so much as an outward change?

Thus you see in general, that, in the production of the new creature, there must be a change.

2dly. More particularly, the change in the new creature consists in two things; and they are both set down in the text: *old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*

1. *Old things are passed away.*] Old pride, old ignorance, old malice; the old house must be pulled down ere you can set up a new.

Obj. *But if all old things must pass away, then there are no new creatures: who can be quite freed from sin? Doth not Paul complain of a body of death?*

Ans. We must know that the change wrought in the new creature, though it be a thorough change, yet it is not a perfect change; sin will remain. As there is a principle of grace, so of corruption; like wine and water mixed, there is in the regenerate flesh as well as spirit. Here is a question arising.

Qu. *If sin in the regenerate is not quite done away, then how far must one put off the old man, that he may be a new creature?*

Of which hereafter.

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*

Doct. "That whosoever is in Christ is a new creature."

We are now upon the trial of the new creature. In it there is a change wrought, and this change consists in two things; which are set down in the text. *viz.* 1. Old things are passed away. 2. All things are become new.

1. *Old things are passed away.* Old pride, old ignorance, old malice. The old house must be pulled down ere you can set up a new.

Obj. *But if all old things must pass away, then there are no new creatures. Who can be quite freed from sin? Doth not Paul complain of a body of death?*

Ans. We must know the change wrought in the new creature is but imperfect; as there is a principle of grace, so of corruption; like wine and water mixed, there is in the regenerate flesh as well as spirit.

Qu. *If sin in the regenerate is not quite done away, then how far must one put off the old man that he may be a new creature?*

Ans. 1. There must be a grieving for the remains of corruption, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Paul did not cry out of his sufferings, his being beaten with rods, shipwreck'd, stoned; but (like the bird of paradise) he bemoaned himself for sin. In the new creature there must be *quotidianus mugitus*, a daily mourning for the indwelling presence of corruption; a child of God doth not wear sin as a gold-chain, but as a fetter.

2. In the new creature there must be a detestation of old things; as one would detest a garment in which is the plague: it is not enough to be angry with sin; but we must hate it, Ps. cxix. 162. *I hate and abhor lying.* Hatred is the highest degree of enmity; and we must hate sin not only for its hurtful effect, but its loathsome nature; as one hates a toad for its poisonous quality.

3. In the new creature there is an opposition against all old things; a Christian not only complains of sin, but fights against it, Gal. v. 17.

Qu. *But may not a natural man oppose sin?*

Ans. Yes; but there is a great difference between his opposing sin, and the new creature's opposing it.

1st. There is a difference in the manner of opposition.

opposition. (1.) The natural man opposeth sin, only for the *shame* of it, as it eclipseth his credit: but the new creature opposeth sin for the *filth* of it; it is the spirit of mischief; it is like rust to gold, or as a stain to beauty.

2. The natural man doth not oppose all sin.

(1.) He doth not oppose *inward* sins, he fights against such sins as are against the light of a natural conscience; but not against *heart-sins*, the first risings of vain thoughts, the stirrings of anger and concupiscence, the venom and impurity of his nature. (2.) He doth not oppose *gospel-sins*; pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, spiritual barrenness: he is not troubled that he can love God no more. (3.) He opposeth not *complexion-sins*, such as the bias of heart carries him more strongly to, as lust, or avarice: he saith of his constitution-sins, as *Naaman*, 2 Kings v. 18. *In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant.* But the new creature opposeth all kind of sin, *odium circa speciem*: as he that hates a serpent, hates all kind of serpents, *Pf. cxix. 104. I hate every false way.*

2dly. There is difference between the natural man's opposing sin, and the new creature's opposing it, in regard of the motives.

A natural man opposeth sin, from *caral* motives; to stop the mouth of conscience, and to prevent hell.

But the new creature opposeth sin upon more *noble* motives; out of love to God, and fear of dishonouring the gospel.

4. In the new creature there is mortifying old corrupt lusts, *Gal. v. 24. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.* The new creature is said to be *dead in sin*, *Rom. vi. 11.* He is dead as to the love of sin, that it doth not bewitch; and as to the power of it, that it doth not command. The new creature is *continually crucifying sin*: some limb of the old *Adam* every day drops off; though sin doth not die perfectly, it dies *daily*.

A gracious soul thinks he can never kill sin enough; he deals with sin as *Joab* with *Abshalom*, 2 Sam. xviii. 14. *He took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Abshalom.* So, with three darts of faith, prayer, and repentance, a christian thrusts through the body of sin; he never thinks this *Abshalom* is enough dead.

Try then, if we have this first sign of the new creature, *old things are passed away.* There is a grieving for sin, a detesting it, an opposing it, a mortifying it; this is the passing away of

*old things*, though not in a legal sense, yet in an evangelical; and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

The second trial of the new creature, is *all things are become new.* The new creature is new all over: grace, though it be but in part, yet it is in every part.

By nature every branch of the soul is defiled with sin, as every part of wormwood is bitter; so, in regeneration, every part of the soul is replenished with grace: therefore grace is called the new man, *Eph. 4. 24.* Not a new eye, or a new tongue: but a new man, there are new dispositions, new principles, new aims; *all things are become new.*

I. In the new creature there is a new understanding. *Eph. iv. 23. Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.* The first thing a limner draws in a picture, is the eye: when God newly limns us, and makes us new creatures, the first thing he draws in our souls is a new eye: the new creature is enlightened to see that which he never saw before.

1. He knows Christ after another manner. An unconverted man, by the light of common grace, may believe Christ to be the Son of God; but the new creature knows Christ after another-guise manner, so as to esteem him above all, to adore him, to touch him by faith to fetch an healing virtue from him.

2. The new creature knows himself better than he did. When the sun shines into a room, it discovers all the dust and cobwebs in it; so, when the light of the spirit shines into the heart, it discovers that corruption which before lay hid; it shews a man his own vileness and nothingness, *Job xl. 4. Behold, I am vile.* A wicked man blinded with self-love, admires himself; like *Narcissus*, that seeing his own shadow upon the water, fell in love with it. Saving-knowledge works self abasement: *Lord, thou art in heaven, and I am in hell*, said a martyr. Hath this *day-star* of knowledge shined on our mind?

II. The new creature is renewed in his *conscience*: the conscience of a natural man is either blind, or dumb, or seared: but conscience in the new creature is renewed. Let us examine, doth conscience check for sin? The least sin makes the eye weep; and the least sin makes conscience smite. How did *David's* heart smite him for cutting off the lap of *Saul's* garment? a good conscience is a star to guide, a register to record, a judge to determine, a witness to accuse



accuse or excuse; if conscience doth all these offices right, then it is a renewed conscience, and speaks peace.

III. In the new creature the *will* is renewed. An old bowl may have a new bias put into it: the will, having a new bias of grace put into it, is strongly carried to good. The will of a natural man opposeth God: when the wind goes one way, and the tide another, then there is a storm; so it is, when God's will goes one way, and ours another: but when our will goes with God's, as the wind with the tide, then there is a sweet calm of peace in the soul; the sanctified will answers to God's will, as the echo to the voice, Ps. xxvii. 8. *When thou saidest, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek.* And the will being renewed, like the *primum mobile*, it carries all the affections along with it.

IV. The new creature hath a new conversation. Grace alters a man's walk; before he walked proudly, now humbly; before loosely, now holily: he makes the word his rule, and Christ's life his pattern, Phil. iii. 20. *Our conversation is in heaven.* As a ship that is sailing eastward, there comes a gale of wind and blows it west-ward: so, before a man did sail hell-ward, and on a sudden the spirit of God comes upon him, and blows him heaven-ward; here is a new conversation. It was a speech of Oecolampadius, *I would not speak or do any thing that I thought Jesus Christ would not approve of, if he were here corporally present.* Where there is circumcision of heart, there is circumspection of life: if we find it thus, that *all things are become new*, then we are new creatures, and shall go to the new Jerusalem when we die.

Use 3. Exhortation. Labour to be new creatures: nothing else will avail us, Gal. vi. 14. *Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* We are for new things; we love new fashions, and why not new hearts? but people are full of prejudices against the new creature.

Obj. 1. *If we are new creatures, there must be so much strictness in religion, so much praying and watching, as discourageth.*

Ans. (1.) Is there any thing excellent to be obtained without labour? What pains is taken in searching for a vein of silver, or seeking for pearl? men cannot have the world without labour; and would they have salvation so? (2.) The labour in religion bears no proportion with

the reward. What are a few tears shed, to a weight of glory? The soldier is content to wrestle with difficulties, and undergo a bloody fight, for a glorious victory. In all labour for heaven there is profit: it is like a man that digs in a golden mine, and carries away all the gold. (3.) Men take more pains to go to hell; what pains doth an ambitious man take to climb to the pinnacle of honour? *Tullia* rode over the dead body of her father, to be made queen. How doth the covetous man tire himself, break his sleep, and his peace, to get the world? Thus some men take more pains in the service of sin, than others do in pursuit of holiness. Men talk of pains in religion; when God's spirit comes into one, it turns labour into delight. It was *Paul's* heaven to serve God, Rom. vii. 22. *The ways of wisdom are pleasantness*, Prov. iii. 17. It is like walking among beds of spices, which cast forth a sweet perfume.

Obj. 2. *But if we leave our old company, and become new creatures, we shall be exposed to many reproaches.*

Ans. Who are they that speak evil of religion but such as are evil? *Male de me loquuntur, sed mali*, said *Seneca*. Besides, is it not better that men reproach us for being good, than that God damn us for being wicked? Mat. v. 11. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you.* Stars are never the less glorious, though they have ugly names given them, as the bear and the dragon. A saint's reproaches are like a soldier's scars, honourable, 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, the spirit of God and of glory rest upon you.* While men clip your credit to make it weigh lighter, they make your crown heavier.

Having answered these objections. I come now to resume the exhortation, above all things labour to be new creatures.

#### MOTIVES.

1st. In this true christianity doth consist. It is not baptism makes a christian; many are no better than baptized heathens. The essential part of religion lies in the new creature, Rom. ii. 29. *Circumcision is that of the heart.* Every thing hath a name from the better part; we call a man a reasonable creature, because of his soul, which is the more noble part; so one is called a christian, because he acts from a principle of the new creature, which the carnal man doth not.

2dly. It is the new creature fits us for communion with God; we cannot converse with  
God

God till then. Birds cannot converse with men unless they had a rational nature put into them; nor can men converse with God, unless, being made new creatures, they partake of the divine nature. Communion with God is a mystery to most: every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the king; all that meddle with holy duties, and, as it were, hang about the court of heaven, have not communion with God: 'tis only the new creature enjoys God's presence in ordinances, and sweetly converses with him, as a child with a father.

3ly. The necessity of being new creatures.

1. Till then we are odious to God, *Zech. xi.* 8. *My soul loathed them.* A sinner is to God worse than a toad: a toad hath no poison, but what God hath put into it; but a sinner hath that which the devil hath put into him, *Acts v.* 3. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?* A wicked man is possessed with an evil spirit. One man is possessed with the devil of pride, another with the devil of malice: this must needs make persons odious to God, to be possessed with the devil. Thus it is till we become new creatures.

2. Till we are new creatures, our duties are not accepted with God; they are but wild grapes, (1.) Because God accepts no man, but where he sees his image. The new creature is called the *renewing of God's image*, *Eph. iv.* 24. When they brought *Tamerlane* a pot of gold, he asked what stamp it had on it; and when he saw the *Roman* stamp on it, he refused it: so, if God doth not see his own stamp and image on the soul, he rejects the most specious services. (2.) Duties of religion are not accepted without the new creature, because there is that wanting which should make them a sweet favour to God. The holy oil for the tabernacle was to be made of several spices and ingredients, *Exod. xxx.* 23. Now, if any of these spices had been left out, it had not been pleasing. The unregenerate man leaves out the chief spice in his duties, and that is faith. And, *Heb. xi.* 6. *Without faith it is impossible to please God.* Faith lays hold on Christ, and so is accepted.

3. Such as are not new creatures, but grow upon the stock of old *Adam*, get no benefit by ordinances; they are to them, as *diacordium* in a dead man's mouth; they lose their virtue: nay, not only ordinances do them no good, but hurt. It were sad, if all a man did eat should turn to poison. The word preached is a *savour of death*; it is not healing, but hardning: nay,

Christ himself is accidentally a *rock of offence*, 1 *Pet. ii.* 7. The wicked stumble at a Saviour, and suck death from the tree of life.

4. Without being new creatures, we cannot arrive at heaven. *Rev. xxi.* 27. *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.* Heaven is not like *Noah's ark*, that received clean and unclean. A sinner is compared to swine, 2 *Pet. ii.* 22. and shall a swinish creature tread upon the golden pavement of heaven? Indeed the frogs came into king *Pharaoh's* court, but in heaven there is no entertainment for such vermine.

It is only the new creature qualifies us for glory: this consecrates the heart and only the pure in heart shall see God. The new creature elevates the soul, as the loadstone elevates the iron. A soul renewed by grace, is fit to ascend to the heavenly glory.

4thly, The Excellency of the new creature. (1.) The nobility. (2.) The immortality. (1.) The nobility. The new creature fetcheth its pedigree from heaven; it is born of God; God counts none else of the blood-royal: it enobles a man's spirit; he aspires after the favour of God, and looks no lower than a crown. The new creature raiseth one to honour; he excels the *princes of the earth*, *Pf. lxxxix.* 27. and is fellow commoner with angels.

(2.) The immortality. The new creature is begotten of the incorruptible seed of the word, and never dies; it lasts as long as the soul, as angels, as heaven. God hath laid out much cost upon it, and if it perish, he should lose all his cost. When *Xerxes* destroyed all the temples in *Greece*, he caused the temple of *Diana* to be preserved for its beautiful structure; the new creature is God's temple, adorned with all the graces, which he will not suffer to be demolished. Riches take wings, kings crowns tumble in the dust; nay, some of the graces may cease; faith and hope shall be no more, but the new creature abideth for ever, 1 *John ii.* 27.

5thly, The misery of the unregenerate creature; dying so, I may say so of him, as Christ said of *Judas*, *Mark xiv.* 21. *It were good for that man if he had not been born.* Better have been a toad, a serpent, any thing, if not a new creature; the old sinner must go into old *tophet*, *Isa. xxx.* 33.

Damned caitiffs will have nothing to ease their torments; not one drop of honey in all their gall. In the sacrifice of jealousy there was no oil put to it, *Numb v.* In hell there is no



oil of mercy put to the sufferings of the damned to lenify them.

Therefore get out of the wild olive of nature ; labour to be new creatures, lest you curse yourselves at last. A sinful life will cause a despairing death.

*Q. What shall we do to be new creatures ?*

*Ans.* 1. Wait on the ordinances. The preaching of the word is the seed of which the new creature is formed ; this is the trumpet which must make the dead in sin come out of their grave.

2. Pray earnestly for the new creature ; *Lord, thou hast made me once, make me again ; what shall I do with this old heart ? It defiles all it toucheth.* Urge God with his promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you.* Say, Lord, I am as the dry bones, but thou didst cause breath to come into them, *Ezek. xvii. 30.* Do the same to me ; breathe a supernatural life of grace into me.

*Use 4. Thankfulness.* Let such as are new

creatures, stand upon mount *Gerizim*, blessing and praising God : ascribe all to the riches of God's love ; set the crown upon the head of free-grace ; God hath done more for you, than if he had made you kings and queens ; though you have not so much of the world as others, you are happier than the greatest monarchs upon earth ; and, I dare say, you would not change with them. The apostles seldom speak of the *new creation*, but they join some thankful praises with it, *1 Pet. i. 3. Blessed be God, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope. Col. i. 13. Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance in light.* The new creature is a sign of election, a badge of adoption. What distinguishing love is this, that God should make any of us *new creatures*, when he hath left the greatest part of the world to perish in their sins ? Such as are patterns of mercy, should be trumpets of praise.

## THE ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT.

### CHAP. I.

#### THE INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT.

*PHIL. iv. 11. I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

**T**HESE words are brought in by way of *Prolepsis*, to anticipate and prevent an objection. The apostle had, in the former verses, laid down many grave and heavenly exhortations ; among the rest, to be *careful for nothing*, *v. 6.* Not to exclude, 1. A *prudential care* ; for, *he that provideth not for his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*, *1 Tim. v. 8.* Nor, 2. A *religious care* ; for, we must give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, *2 Pet. i. 10.* But, 3. To exclude all *anxious care* about the issues and events of things ; *take no thought for your life, what you shall eat*, *Mat. vi. 25.* And in this sense it should be a christian's care not to be careful. The word in the Greek [*careful*] comes from a primitive, that signifies, *to cut the heart in pieces*, a soul-dividing care ; take heed of this. We are bid to *commit our way unto the Lord*, *Ps. xxxvii. 5.* The Hebrew word is, *roll thy way upon the Lord*. It is our work to cast care, *1 Pet. v. 7.* And it is God's work

to take care. By our immoderacy we take his work out of our hand.

Care, when it is *excentric*, either distrustful or distracting, is very dishonourable to God ; it takes away his providence, as if he sat in heaven, and minded not what became of things here below ; like a man that makes a clock, and then leaves it to go of itself. Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things ; and usually, while we are thinking how we shall do to live, we forget how to die. Care is a spiritual canker, that doth waste and dispirit ; we may sooner by our care add a furlong to our grief, than a cubit to our comfort. God doth threaten it as a curse. *They shall eat their bread with carefulness*, *Ezek. xii. 19.* Better fast than eat of that bread. *Be careful for nothing.*

Now, lest any one should say, yea, *Paul*, thou preacheest that to us, which thou hast scarce learned thy self ; hast thou learned not to be careful ? The apostle seems tacitly to answer that, in the words of the text ; *I have learned,*

*in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.*

A speech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to be written in letters of gold upon the crowns and diadems of princes. The text doth branch itself into these two general parts.

I. The scholar, *Paul: I have learned.*

II. The lesson: *in every state to be content.*

CHAP. II. *The first branch of the text, the scholar, with the first proposition.*

I begin with the first. I. The scholar, and his proficiency; *I have learned.* Out of which I shall, by the by, observe two things by way of paraphrase. 1. It is not [Gr. *ekousa*] but Gr. *emathon*] The apostle doth not say, I have *heard*, that in every estate I should be content; but, I have *learned*. Whence, 1. Doct. *It is not enough for christians to hear their duty, but they must learn their duty.* It is one thing to hear, and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. Saint Paul was a practitioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There was four sorts of ground in the parable, *Luke viii. 5.* And but one good ground: an emblem of this truth, many *hearers*, but few *learners*. There are two things which keep us from learning.

1. *Slighting what we hear.* Christ is the *pearl of price*; when we disesteem this pearl, we shall never learn either its value, or its virtue. The gospel is a rare *mystery*; in one place (*Acts xx. 24.*) It is called the *gospel of grace*, in another (*1 Cor. iv. 4.*) The *gospel of glory*; because in it, as in a transparent glass, the glory of God is resplendent. But he that hath learned to contemn this *mystery*, will hardly ever learn to obey it: he that looks upon the things of heaven as things by the by, and perhaps the driving of a trade, or carrying on some politic design to be of greater importance; this man is in the high road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of his peace. Who will learn that which he thinks is scarce worth learning?

2. *Forgetting what we hear.* If a scholar have his rules laid before him, and he forgets them as fast as he reads them, he will never learn, *James i. 25.* *Aristotle* calls the *memory* the *scribe* of the soul; and *Bernard* calls it the *stomach* of the soul, because it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits, we have great memories in other things; we remember that which is *vain*. *Cyrus* could

remember the name of every soldier in his huge army; we remember injuries. This is to fill a precious cabinet with dung; but, *quam facilis oblivio boni?* As *Hierom* saith, how soon do we forget the sacred truths of God? We are apt to forget three things; our *faults*, our *friends*, our *instructions*. Many christians are like sieves; put a sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out; so, while they are hearing of a sermon, they remember something; but *take the sieve out of the water*, as soon as they are gone out of the church, all is forgotten. *Let these sayings* (saith Christ) *sink down into your ears*, *Luke ix. 44.* In the original it is, *put these sayings into your ears*: as a man that would hide a jewel from being stolen, locks it up safe in his chest. *Let them sink*; the word must not only fall as dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which soaks to the root of the tree, and makes it fructify. Oh how often doth Satan, that fowl of the air, pick up the good seed that is sown!

*Use.* Let me put you upon a serious trial. Some of you have heard much; you have lived forty, fifty, sixty, years under the blessed trumpet of the gospel; what have you learned? You may have heard a thousand sermons, and yet not learned one. Search your consciences.

1. You have heard much against sin; are you *hearers*? Or are you *scholars*?

How many sermons have you heard against *covetousness*, that it is the root, on which pride, idolatry, treason do grow? *2 Tim. iv. 2.* and *4.* One calls it a metropolitan sin: it is a complex evil, it doth twist a great many sins in with it. There is hardly any sin, but covetousness is a main ingredient into it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the horse-leech that cry, *give, give*. How much have you heard against *rash anger*, that it is a short frensie, a dry drunkenness; that it rests in the *bosom of fools*; and upon the least occasion do your spirits begin to take fire; how much have you heard against *swearing*? It is Christ's express mandate, *swear not at all*, *Matth. vi. 34.* This sin of all others may be termed the *unfruitful work of darkness*, *Eph. v. 11.* It is neither sweetened with pleasure, nor enriched with profit (the usual vermilion wherewith Satan doth paint sin.) Swearing is forbidden with a *subpœna*. While the swearer shoots his oaths, like *flying arrows* at God, to pierce his glory, God shoots a *flying roll* of curses against him, *Zech. v. 2.* And do you make your tongue a racket by which you



1088 oaths as tennis-balls? Do you sport your lives with oaths, as the Philistines did with *Samson*, which will at last pull the house about your ears? Alas! How have they learned what sin is, that have not learned to leave sin? Doth he know what a viper is, that will play with it?

3. You have heard much of Christ, have you learned Christ? The *Jews* (as *Jerom* saith) carried Christ in their *Bibles*, but not in their *heart*; their sound went into all the earth, *Rom. x. 18.* The prophets and apostles were as trumpets, whose sound went abroad into the world; yet many thousands who heard the noise of these trumpets, had not learned Christ, *they have not all obeyed, v. 16.*

1. A man may know much of Christ, and yet not learn Christ, the devils knew Christ, *Matth. i. 24.*

2. A man may preach Christ, and yet not learn Christ, as *Judas* and the pseudo-apostles, *Phil. v. 15.*

A man may profess Christ, and yet not learn Christ: there are many professors in the world that Christ will profess against, *Mat. vii. 22, 23.*

Qu. What is it then to learn Christ?

Ans. 1. To learn Christ, is, to be made like Christ; when the divine characters of his holiness are engraven upon our hearts. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18.* There is a metamorphosis made; a sinner, viewing Christ's image in the glass of the gospel, is transformed into that image: Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but went away quite changed. A true saint is a divine land skip or picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively portrayed and drawn forth. He hath the same spirit, the same judgment, the same will with Jesus Christ.

2. To learn Christ, is to believe in him; *My Lord, my God, John xx. 28.* When we do not only *credere Deum*, but *in Deum*; which is the actual application of Christ to ourselves, and as it were the spreading of the sacred medicine of his blood upon our souls. You have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, *My Jesus*; be not offended if I tell you, the devil can say his creed as well as you.

3. To learn Christ, is to love Christ. When we have bible-conversations, our lives as rich diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the church of God, *Phil. i. 17.* and are (in some sense)

parallel with the life of Christ, as the transcript with the original. So much for the first notion of the word.

CHAP. III. Concerning the second proposition.

II. This word *I have learned*, is a word imports difficulty, it shews how hardly the apostle came by contentment of mind; it was not bred in nature. *St. Paul* did not come naturally by it, but he had learned it. It cost him many a prayer and tear, it was taught him by the spirit.

Whence Doctr. 2. *Good things are hard to come by.* The business of religion is not so facile as most do imagine. *I have learned*, saith *St. Paul*. Indeed you need not learn a man to sin, this is natural, *Pf. lviii. 3.* and therefore facile, it comes as water out of a spring. It is an easy thing to be wicked; hell will be taken without storm; but matters of religion must be learned. To cut the flesh is easy, but to prick a vein, and not cut an artery is hard. The trade of sin needs not to be learned, but the art of divine contentment is not atchieved without holy industry; *I have learned.*

There are two pregnant reasons, why there must be so much study and exertion.

1. Because spiritual things are against nature. Every thing in religion is antipodes to nature. There are in religion two things, *credenda*, & *facienda*, and both are against nature. 1. *Credenda*, matters of faith: as, for men to be justified by the righteousness of another, to become a fool that he may be wise, to save all by losing all; this is against nature. 2. *Facienda*, matters of practice: as, 1. *Self-denial*; for a man to deny his own wisdom, and see himself blind; his own will, and have it melted into the will of God; plucking out the right-eye, beheading and crucifying that sin, which is the *favourite*, and lies nearest to the heart; for a man to be dead to the world, and in the midst of want to abound; for him to take up the cross, and follow Christ, not only in golden, but in bloody paths; to embrace religion when it is dressed in night-cloths, all the jewels of honour and preferment being pulled off; this is against nature, and therefore must be learned. 2. *Self-examination*; for a man to take his heart (as a watch) all in pieces; to set up a spiritual inquisition, or court of conscience, and traverse things in his own soul; to take *David's* candle and lantern, *Pf. cxix. v. 105.* and search for sin; nay, as judge, to pass the sentence upon himself, 2 *Sam. xxxiv. 17.* this is against nature, and

and will not easily be attained to without learning. 3. *Self-reformation.* To see a man as *Caleb of another spirit*, walking antipodes to himself, the current of his life altered, and running into the channel of religion; this is *wholly against nature*. When a stone ascends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent; the motion of the soul heaven-ward, is a violent motion, it must be learned; flesh and blood is not skilled in these things; nature can no more cast out nature, than Satan can cast out Satan.

2. Because spiritual things are *above nature*. There are some things in nature that are hard to find out, as the cause of things, which are not learned without study. *Aristotle*, a great philosopher, (whom some have called an eagle fallen from the clouds,) yet could not find out the motion of the river *Euripus*, therefore threw himself into it; what then are divine things, which are in a sphere above nature, and beyond all human disquisition? as the trinity, the hypostatical union, the mystery of faith to believe against hope; only God's spirit can light our candle here. The apostle calls these *the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. The gospel is full of jewels, but they are locked up for sense and reason. The angels in heaven are searching into these sacred depths, 1 Pet. i. 22.

*Uf.* Let us beg the spirit of God to teach us; we must be *divinitus docti*: the eunuch could, read, but he could not understand, till *Philip joined himself to his chariot*, Acts vii. 29. God's Spirit must join itself to our chariot; he must teach, or we cannot learn: *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord*, Isa. liv. 13. A man may read the figure on the dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the sun shine upon the dial; we may read the bible over, but we cannot learn to purpose, till the spirit of God shine into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Oh, implore this blessed spirit, it is God's prerogative-royal to teach. *I am the Lord thy God, that teacheth thee to profit*, Isa. xlviii. 17. Ministers may tell us our lesson, God only can teach us; we have lost both our hearing and eye-sight, therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever since *Eve* listened to the serpent, we have been deaf; and since she looked on the tree of knowledge, we have been blind; but when God comes to teach he removes these impediments *Isa.* xxxv.

5. We are naturally *dead*, Eph. ii. 1. who will go about to teach a dead man? Yet behold, God undertakes to make dead men to understand mysteries! God is the grand teach-

er. This is the reason the word preached works so differently upon men: two in a pew; the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the ordinances as a dead child at the breast, and gets no nourishment. What is the reason? Because the heavenly gale of the spirit blows upon one, and not upon the other; one hath the *anointing of God, which teacheth him all things*, 1 John ii. 27. the other hath it not. God's spirit speaks sweetly, but irresistibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could sing the new song, but those who were sealed in *their foreheads*, Rev. xiv. 2. reprobates could not sing it. Those that are skilled in the mysteries of salvation, must have the seal of the spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer, *Lord, breathe thy spirit into thy word*: and we have a promise, which may add wings to prayer, *Luke* xi. 13. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly father give his spirit to them that ask him?*

And thus much of the first part of the text the scholar, which I intended only as a short gloss or paraphrase.

CHAP. IV. *The second branch of the text, the lesson itself with the proposition.*

II. I come to the second, which is the main thing, the lesson itself; in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.

Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and is certainly more to be wondered at in *St. Paul* that he knew how to turn himself to every condition, than all the learning in the world besides, which hath been so applauded in former ages by *Julius Cesar*, *Ptolemy*, *Xenophon*, the great admirers of learning.

The text hath but few words in it, in every state content; but if that be true, which once *Fulgentius* said, that the most golden sentence is ever measured by brevity and swavity, then, this is a most accomplished speech; here is *magnus in parvo*. The text is like a precious jewel, little in quantity, but great in worth and value.

The main proposition I shall insist upon, is this, *that a gracious spirit is a contented spirit*. The doctrine of contentment is very superlative, and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be christians.

1. It is an *hard lesson*. The angels in heaven had not learned it; they were not contented. Though their state was very glorious, yet they were still soaring aloft, and aimed at something



something higher, *Jude* ver. 6. *The angels which kept not their first estate.* They kept not their estate, because they were not contented with their estate. Our first parents, clothed with the white robe of innocency in paradise, had not learned to be content; they had aspiring hearts, and thinking their human nature too low and home-spun, would be crowned with the Deity, and be as *gods*, *Gen.* iii. 5. Though they had the choice of all the trees of the garden, yet none would content them but the *tree of knowledge*, which they supposed would have been as eye-salve to have made them omniscient. Oh then, if this lesson were so hard to learn in *innocency*, how hard shall we find it, who are clogged with corruption.

2. It is of *universal extent*, it concerns all.

1<sup>st</sup>. It concerns *rich men*. One would think it needless to press those to contentment whom God hath blessed with great estates, but rather persuade them to be humble and thankful; nay, but I say, *be content*. Rich men have their discontents as well as others; as appears, (1.) When they have a great estate, yet they are discontented that they have no more; they would make the hundred talent a thousand. A man in wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts: covetousness is a dry dropsey; an earthly heart is like the *grave*, *that is never satisfied*, *Prov.* xxx. 16. Therefore I say to you rich men, *be content*. (2.) Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their estates (which is seldom) yet, though they have estate enough, they have not honour enough; if their barns are full enough, yet their *turrets* are not high enough. They would be some body in the world, as *Theudas*, *who boasted himself to be some body*, *Acts* v. 36. They never go so cheerfully as when the wind of honour and applause fills their sails; if this wind be down, they are discontented. One would think *Haman* had as much as his proud heart could desire: he was set above all the princes, advanced upon the pinnacle of honour to be the second man in the kingdom, *Esth.* iii. 1. Yet in the midst of all his pomp, because *Mordecai* would not uncover and kneel, he is discontented, *ver.* 2. and full of wrath, *ver.* 5. and there was no way to assuage this pleurisy of revenge, but by letting all the *Jews* blood, and offering them up in sacrifice. The itch of honour is seldom allayed without blood; therefore I say to you rich men, *be content*. (3.) Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with

their honour and magnificent titles; yet they have not always contentment in their relations. She that lies in the bosom, may sometimes blow the coals; as *Job's* wife, who in a pet would have him fall out with God himself, *Curse God and die*. Sometimes children cause discontent; how often is it seen that the mother's milk doth nourish a viper? and that he that once sucked her breast, goes about to suck her blood? Parents do often of grapes gather thorns, and of figs thistles; children are sweet-briar. Like the rose, which is a fragrant flower; but, as *Basil* saith, it hath its prickles. Our relative comforts are not all pure wine, but mixed; they have in them more dregs than spirits, and are like that river *Plutarch* speaks of, where the waters in the morning run sweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no *charter of exemption* granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called up to be contented.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The doctrine of contentment concerns poor men. You that do suck so liberally from the breasts of providence, *be content*; it is an hard lesson, therefore it had need be set upon the sooner. How hard is it when the livelihood is even gone, a great estate boiled away almost to nothing, then to be contented. The means of subsistence is in scripture called *our life*, because it is the very sinews of life. The woman in the gospel spent *all her living upon the physicians* *Luke* viii. 43. In the *Greek* it is, *she spent her whole life upon the physicians*, because she spent her means by which she should live. 'Tis much when poverty hath clipped our wings, then to be content; but, though hard, it is excellent; and the apostle here had *learned in every state to be content*. God had brought *St. Paul* into as great variety of conditions as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; else sure he could never have gone thro' it with so much cheerfulness. See into what vicissitudes this blessed apostle was cast: *we are troubled on every side*, *2 Cor.* iv. 8. There was the sadness of his condition; *but not distressed*, there was his content in that condition: *we are perplexed*, there is his affliction; but not in *despair*, there is his contentation. And, if we read a little further, *2 Cor.* xi. 4. *In afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, &c.* There is his trouble; and behold his content, *ver.* 10. *As having nothing, yet possessing all things*. When the apostle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that sweet contentment of mind (which was like music

music in his soul) he possessed all. We read a short map of history of his sufferings, 2 Cor. ix. 23. 24. 25. *In prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, &c.* Yet behold the blessed frame and temper of his spirit, *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* Which way soever providence did blow, he had such heavenly skill and dexterity, that he knew how to steer his course. For his outward estate he was indifferent; he could be either on the top of Jacob's ladder, or the bottom; he could sing either *placencia* or *lachrymæ*, the dirge or the anthem; he could be any thing that God would have him: *I know how to want, how to abound*; here is a rare pattern for us to imitate. Paul, in regard of his faith and courage, was like a cedar, he could not be stirred; but for his outward condition, he was like a reed bending every way with the wind of providence. When a prosperous gale did blow upon him, he could bend with that, *I know how to be full*: and when a boistrous gust of affliction did blow, he could bend in humility with that, *I know how to be hungry*. St. Paul was (as Aristotle speaks) like a *die* that hath four squares; throw it which way you will, it falls upon a bottom: let God throw the apostle which way he would, he fell upon this bottom of contentment. A contented spirit is like a watch; though you carry it up and down with you, yet the spring of it is not shaken; nor the wheels out of order, but the watch keeps its perfect motion: so it was with St. Paul, though God carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other; the spring of his heart was not broken, the wheels of his affections were not disordered, but kept their constant motion towards heaven; *still content*. The ship that lies at anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks; flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them: a christian having cast anchor in heaven, his heart never sinks; a gracious spirit is a content spirit. This is a rare art: Paul did not learn it at the feet of Gamaliel. *I am instructed.* v. 12. I am initiated into this holy mystery: as if he had said, I have gotten the divine art, I have the knack of it; God must make us right artists. If we should put some men to an art that they are not skilled in, how unfit would they be for it? Put an husband-man to limning or drawing pictures, what strange work would he make? This is out of

his sphere. Take a limner that is exact in laying of colours, and put him to plough, or set him to planting and grafting of trees, this is not his art, he is not skilled in it: bid a natural man live by faith, and when all things go cross, *be contented*; you bid him do that he hath no skill in, you may as well bid a child guide the stern of a ship: to live contented upon God in the deficiency of outward comforts, is an art which *flesh and blood hath not learned*; nay, many of God's own children. Who excel in some duties of religion, when they come to this of contentment, how do they bungle? They have scarce commenced masters of this art.

CHAP. V. *The resolving of some questions,*

For the illustration of this doctrine, I shall propound these questions.

Qu. 1. *Whether a christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented?*

Ans. Yes; for else he is not a saint, but a stoic. Rachel did well to weep for her children, *there was nature*; but her fault was, she refused to be comforted, *there was discontent*. Christ himself was sensible when he saw great drops of blood, and said, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, Mat. xxvi. 39. yet he was contented, and sweetly submitted his will. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*. The apostle bids us *humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God*, 2 Pet. v. 6. which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

Qu. 2. *Whether a christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented?*

Ans. Yes: *Unto thee have I opened my cause*, Jer. xx. 12. and *David poured out his complaints before the Lord*, Ps. cxlii. 2. We may cry to God, and desire him to write down all our injuries: shall not the child complain to his father? When any burden is upon the spirit, prayer gives vent, it easeth the heart. *Hannah's* spirit was burdened; *I am* (says she) *a woman of a troubled spirit*, 1 Sam. i. 18. Now, having prayed and wept, she went away and was no more sad; only here is the difference between a holy complaint, and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain to God, in the other we complain of God.

Qu. 3. *What is it properly that contentment doth exclude?*

Ans. There are three things which contentment doth banish out of its diocese, and can by no means consist with it.

1. It excludes a *vexatious repining*; this is properly the daughter of discontent. *I mourn in*



in my complaint, Psal. lv. 2. He doth not say I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart; it is a rising up against God. When the sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blasphemy. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boils off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an uneven discomposure: when a man saith, I am in such straits, that I know not how to evolve or get out, I shall be undone. Head and heart are so taken up, that a man is not fit to pray or meditate, &c. He is not himself: just as when an army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that; the army is put into disorder: so a man's thoughts run up and down distracted. Discontent doth dislocate and unjoint the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a *childish dependency*; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate, or wind himself out of the present trouble, begins *succumbere oneri*, to faint and sink under it. For care is to the mind as a burden to the back, it loads the spirits, and, with overloading, sinks them. A despondent spirit is a discontented spirit.

#### CHAP. VI. *Shewing the nature of contentment.*

Having answered these questions, I shall in the next place, come to describe this *atarkeia*, or contentment.

It is a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a christian carries himself in an equal poise in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three aphorisms.

1. Contentment is a *divine thing*, it becomes ours, not by *acquisition*, but *infusion*; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the spirit of God in the soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of philosophy, but is of an heavenly birth; it is therefore very observable that contentment is joined with godliness, and goes in equipage; but *godliness without contentment is great gain*, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Contentment being a consequent of godliness, or concomitant, or *both*; I call it *divine*, to contradicting it to that contentment, which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have seemed to have this contentment, but it was only the shadow and picture of it; the beyl. not the true diamond; theirs was but civil, this is

sacred; theirs was only from principles of reason, this of religion; theirs was only lighted at nature's torch, this at the lamp of scripture. Reason may a little teach contentment; as thus. Whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to; and if I meet with crosses, it is but a catholic misery; all have their share, why therefore should I be troubled? Reason may suggest this; and indeed, this may be rather constraint; but to live securely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature supplies, religion can only bring this into the soul's exchequer.

2. Contentment is an intrinsic thing; it lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment hath both its fountain and stream in the soul. The beam hath not its light from the air; the beams of comfort which a contented man hath, doth not arise from foreign comforts, but from within. As sorrow is seated in the spirit, *the heart knows its own grief*, Prov. xxiv. 16. So contentment lies within the soul, and doth not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this blessed contentment; it is a spiritual thing, and ariseth from spiritual grounds, *viz, the apprehension of God's love*. When there is a tempest without, there may be music within; a bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart; outward afflictions cannot sting to a christian's heart, where contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our money and plate, but not of this pearl of contentment, unless we are willing to part with it; for it is locked up in the cabinet of the heart: the soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of contentment, is like *Noah* in the ark, that can sing in the midst of a deluge.

3. Contentment is an habitual thing, it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some stars which are seen but seldom; it is a settled temper of the heart. One action doth not denominate; he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so; but he is said to be liberal, that is *given to liberality*, Rom. xii. 13. That is, who upon all occasions is willing to indulge the necessities of the poor; so he is said to be a contented man that is given to contentment. It is not casual, but constant. *Aristotle*, in his rhetoric, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from passion, and those which arise from complexion; the pale face may look red

red when it blusheth, but this is only a passion; he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man, who is so upon an occasion, and perhaps when he is pleased; but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

CHAP. VII. *Reasons pressing to holy contentment.*

Having opened the nature of contentment, I come next to lay down some reasons, or arguments to contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The first is, *God's precept*. It is charged upon us as a duty; *be content with such things as you have*, Heb. xiii. 5. The same God, who hath bid us believe, hath bid us be content; if we obey not, we run ourselves into a spiritual *premunire*. God's word is a sufficient warrant; it hath authority in it, and must be a *superseadeas*, or sacred spell to discontent. *Ipse dixit* was enough among *Pythagoras's* scholars: *be it enacted*, is the royal stile. God's word must be the star that guides, and his will the weight that moves our obedience; his will is a law, and hath majesty enough in it to captivate us into obedience; our hearts must not be more unquiet than the raging sea, which at his word is stilled, *Mat. viii. 26*.

2. The second reason, inforcing contentment, is, *God's promise*: for he hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. Where God hath engaged himself, under hand and seal, for our necessary provisions. If a king should say to one of his subjects, *I will take care for thee*; as long as I have any crown-revenues, thou shalt be provided for; if thou art in danger, I will secure thee; if in want, I will supply thee; would not that subject be content? Behold, God hath here made a promise to the believer, and as it were entred into bond for his security, *I will never leave thee*; shall not this charm down the devil of discontent? *Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will preserve them alive*, Jer. xlix. 11. Methinks I see the godly man on his death-bed much discontented, and hear him complaining, what will become of my wife and children when I am dead and gone? They may come to poverty: saith God, trouble not thy self, *be content*, I will take care of thy children; and, *let thy widow trust in me*. God hath made a promise to us, *that he will not leave us*, and hath entailed the promise upon our wife and

children; and will not this satisfy? True faith will take God's single bond, without calling for witnesses.

Be content, by *virtue of a decree*. Whatever our condition be, God the great umpire of the world hath from everlasting decreed that condition for us, and by his providence ordered all appertinances thereunto. Let a christian often think with himself, who hath placed me here; whether I am in a higher sphere, or in a lower? Not chance or fortune, (as the purblind heathens imagined;) no, it is the wise God that hath by his providence fixed me in this orb: we must act that scene which God would have us; say not, such an one hath occasioned this to me, look not too much at the under-wheel. We read in *Ezekiel*, of a wheel within a wheel, *Ezek. i. 16*. God's decree is the cause of the turning of the wheels, and his providence is the inner-wheels that moves all the rest. God's providence is that helm, which turns about the whole ship of the universe. Say then, as holy *David*, *I was silent, because thou, Lord, didst it*, Ps. xxxix. 9. God's providence (which is nothing else but the carrying on of his decree) should be a *superseadeas* and counterpoison against discontent; God hath set us in our station, and he hath done it in wisdom.

We fancy such a condition of life is good for us; whereas if we were our own carvers, we should often cut the worse piece. *Lot*, being put to his choice, did choose *Sodom*, Gen. xiii. 10. Which soon after, was burnt with fire. *Rachel* was very desirous of children, *give me children or I die*; Gen. xxx. And it cost her her life in bringing forth a child. *Abraham* was earnest for *Ishmael*, *O that Ishmael may live before thee*! Gen. xvii. 18. But he had little comfort either of him or his seed; he was born a son of strife, *his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him*. The disciples wept for Christ's leaving the world, they chose his corporal presence; whereas it was best for them that Christ should be gone, for *else the comforter would not come*, John xvi. 7. *David* chose the life of his child, *he wept and fasted for it*, 2 Sam. xii. 16. Whereas if the child had lived, it would have been a perpetual monument of his shame. We stand oft in our own light; if we should sort, or parcel out our own comforts, we should hit upon the wrong. Is it not well for the child, that the parent doth chuse for it? Were it left to itself, it would perhaps chuse a knife to cut its own fingers.



fingers. A man in a paroxysm calls for wine, which if he had, it were little better than poison: it is well for the patient, that he is at the physician's appointment.

The consideration of a decree determining and a providence disposing all things that fall out, should work our hearts to holy contentment. The wise God hath ordered our condition: if he sees it better for us to abound, we shall abound; if he sees it better for us to want, we shall want; be content to be at God's dispose.

God sees in his infinite wisdom, the same condition is not convenient for all; that which is good for one, may be bad for another: one season of weather will not serve all mens occasions; one needs sunshine, another rain: one condition of life will not fit every man, no more than one suit of apparel will fit every body: prosperity is not fit for all, nor yet adversity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater stock of grace, more faith and patience; he can *gather grapes of thorns*, pick some comfort out of the crois; every one cannot do this. Another man is seated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place requires more parts of judgment, which every one is not capable of; perhaps he can use his estate better; he hath a public heart as well as a public place. The wise God sees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is he placeth men in different orbs and spheres; some higher, some lower: one man desires health, God sees sickness is better for him; God will work health out of sickness, by bringing the body of death, into a consumption. Another man desires liberty, God sees restraint better for him; he will work his liberty by restraint; when his feet are bound, his heart shall be most enlarged. Did we believe this, it would give check to the sinful disputes and cavils of hearts; shall I be discontented at that which is enacted by a decree, and ordered by a providence? Is this to be a child or a rebel?

CHAP. VIII. Use I. *Shewing how a christian may make his life comfortable.*

It shews how a christian may come to lead a comfortable life, even an heaven upon earth, be the times what they will; viz. By *christian contentment*, Prov. xv. 13. The comfort of life doth not stand in having much; it is Christ's maxim, *man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he doth possess*, Luke

xii. 15. But it is in being contented. Is not the bee as well contented with feeding on the dew, or sucking from a flower, as the ox that grazeth on the mountains? Contentment lies within a man, *in the heart*; and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our barns filled, but our mind quiet. The contented man (saith *Seneca*) is the happy man; discontent is a fretting humour, which dries the brains, wastes the spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life: discontent makes a man that he doth not enjoy what he doth possess. A drop or two of vinegar will sowre a whole glass of wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of discontent will imbitter and poison all. *Comfort depends upon contentment*; *Jacob* went halting, when the sinew upon the hollow of his thigh shrank; so, when the sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as necessary to keep the life comfortable, as oil is necessary to keep the lamp burning; the clouds of discontent do often drop the showers of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? We may have it if we will. A christian may carve out what condition he will to himself. Why dost thou complain of thy troubles? It is not trouble that troubles, but discontent; it is not the water without the ship, but the water that gets within the leak, which drowns it; it is not outward affliction that can make the life of a christian sad; a contented mind would sail above these waters: but when there's a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks. Do therefore as the mariners, pump the water out, and stop this spiritual leak in thy soul, and no trouble can hurt thee.

CHAP. IX. Use II. *A check to the discontented christian.*

Here is a just reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost epidemical. Some not content with their calling which God hath set them in, must be a step higher, from the plough to the throne; who like the spider in the *Proverbs*, will take hold with her hands, and be in kings palaces, Prov. xxx. 28. Others from the shop to the pulpit, *Numb.* xii. 2. They would be in the temple of honour, before they are in the temple of virtue; who step into *Moses's* chair, without *Aaron's* bells and pomegranates; like apes, which do most shew their deformity when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God hath

hath bestowed gifts upon men, in private to edify; that he hath enriched them with many mercies? But, *seek they the priest-hood also?* Numb. xvi. 9. What is this but discontent arising from high-flown pride? These do secretly tax the wisdom of God, that he hath not skrewed them up in their condition a peg higher. Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better. One man commends this kind of life, another commends that, one man thinks a country-life best, another a city-life: the soldier thinks it best to be a merchant; and the merchant to be a soldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God would have them. How is it that no man is contented? Very few christians have learned St. Paul's lesson; neither poor nor rich know how to be content, they can learn any thing but this.

1. If men are poor, they learn to be, 1. *Envious*; they malign those that are above them. Another's prosperity is an eye-sore. When God's candle shines upon their neighbour's tabernacle, this light offends them. In the midst of wants men can (in this sense) abound, *viz.* In envy and malice: an envious eye is an evil eye. 2. They learn to be *querulous*, still complaining, as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling of their wants, they want this and that comfort; whereas their greatest want is a contented spirit. Those that are well enough content with their sins, yet are not content with their condition.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be covetous; thirsting insatiably after the world, and by unjust means scraping it together; their *right-hand is full of bribes*, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *Pf. lvi. 10.* Put a good cause in one scale, and a piece of gold in the other, and the gold weighs heaviest. There are (saith Solomon) four things that say, *it is not enough*, Prov. xxx. 15. I may add a fifth, *viz.* The heart of a covetous man. So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

Never certainly since the creation did this sin of discontent reign or rather rage more than in our times; never was God more dishonoured: you can hardly speak with any, but the passion of his tongue betrays the discontent of his heart; every one lisps out his trouble, and here even the stammering tongue speaks too freely and fluently.

If we have not what we desire, God shall

not have a good look from us, but presently we are sick of discontent, and ready to die out of an humour. If God will not forgive the people of *Israel* for their lusts, they bid him take their lives; they must have quails to their manna. *Ahab*, though a king (and one would think his crown-lands had been sufficient for him, yet) is sullen and discontented for *Naboth's vineyard*. *Jonah*, though a good man and a prophet, yet ready to die in a pet, *Jon. iv. 8.* And because God killed his gourd, kill me too, saith he. *Rachel*, give me children, or I die; she had many blessings, if she could have seen them, but wanted this *contentation*. God will supply our wants, but must he satisfy our lusts too? Many are *discontented* for a very trifle; another hath a better dress, a richer jewel, a newer fashion. *Nero*, not content with his empire, was troubled that the musician had more skill in playing than he: how phantastic are some, that pine away in discontent for the want of those things, which if they had, would but render them more ridiculous.

CHAP. X. Use III. *A persuasive to contentment.*

It exhorts us to labour for *contentation*; this is that which doth beautifie and bespangle a christian, and as a spiritual embroidery, doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

Obj. But methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, alas, how is it possible to be contented? The Lord hath made my chain heavy, Lam. iii. 7. He hath cast me into a very sad condition.

Ans. There is no sin, but labours either to hide itself under some mask; or, if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate itself by some apology. This sin of *discontent* I find very witty in its apologies, which I shall first discover, and then make a reply. We must lay it down as a rule, that *discontent is a sin*; so that all the pretences and apologies wherewith it labours to justify itself, are but the painting and dressing of a trumpet.

§ 1. The first apology that discontent makes answered.

The first apology which discontent makes is this; *I have lost a child*. *Paulina*, upon the loss of her children, was so possessed with a spirit of sadness, that she had like to have intombed herself in her own discontent; our love to *relation* is oftentimes more than our love to *religion*.

Reply 1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he takes away. If



we must in every thing give thanks, 1 Thess. v. 18. Then in nothing be discontented.

*Reply 2.* Perhaps God hath taken away the cistern, that he may give you the more of the spring; he hath darkened the star-light, that you may have more sun-light. God intends you shall have more of himself, and is not he better than ten sons? Look not so much upon a temporal loss, as a spiritual gain; the comforts of the world run dregs; those which come out of the granary of the promise, are pure and sweeter.

*Reply 3.* Your child was not given but lent. *I have, saith Hannah, lent my son to the Lord,* 1 Sam. i. 21. She lent him? The Lord hath lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent; what a man lends, he may call for again when he pleases. God hath put out a child to thee a while to nurse; wilt thou be displeased if he take his child home again? O be not discontented that a mercy is taken away from you, but rather be thankful that it was lent you so long.

*Reply 4.* Suppose your child be taken from you, either he was good or bad; if he was rebellious, you have not so much parted with a child, as a burden; you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you: if he was religious, then remember, he is taken from the evil to come, *Isa. lvii. 1.* And placed in his centre of felicity. This lower region is full of gross and hurtful vapours; how happy are those who are mounted into the celestial orbs! the righteous is taken away; in the original it is, *he is gathered*; a wicked child is cut off, but the pious child is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and candy them, and preserve them by them; so hath God gathered thy child as a sweet flower, that he may candy it with glory, and preserve it by him for ever. Why then should a christian be discontented? Why should he weep excessively? *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves,* Luke xxiii. 28. So, could we hear our children speaking to us out of heaven, they would say, Weep not for us who are happy; we ly upon a soft pillow, even in the bosom of Christ; the prince of peace is embracing us and kissing us with the kisses of his lips: be not troubled at our preferment; *weep not for us,* but weep for yourselves, who are in a sinful sorrowful world: you are in the valley of tears, but we are on the mountain of spices; we are gotten to our harbour, but you are still tossing

upon the waves of inconstancy. O christian; be not discontented that thou hast parted with such a child; but rather rejoice that thou hadst such a child to part with. Break forth into thankfulness. What an honour is it to a parent to beget such a child, that while he lives increaseth the joy of the glorified angels, *Luke xx. 10.* And when he dies, increaseth the number of the glorified saints.

*Reply 5.* If God hath taken away one of your children, he hath left you more, he might have stripped you of all. He took away *Job's* comforts, his estate, his children; and indeed his wife was left, but as a cross. Satan made a bow of this rib (as *Chrysaostom* speaks) and shot a temptation by her at *Job*, thinking to have him shot to the heart; *curse God and die:* but *Job* had upon him the breast-plate of integrity; and though his children were taken away, yet not his graces; still he is content, still he blesteth God. O think how many mercies you still enjoy; yet our base hearts are more discontented at one loss, than thankful for an hundred mercies. God hath plucked one bunch of grapes from you; but how many precious clusters are left behind?

*Obj.* But it was my only child, the staff of my age, the seed of my comfort, and the only blossom out of which my ancient family did grow.

*Ans.* 1. God hath promised you (if you belong to him) a name better than of sons and daughters, *Isa. lvi. 5.* Is he dead that should have been the monument to have kept up the name of a family? God hath given you a new name, he hath written your name in the book of life: behold, your spiritual heraldry: here is a name that cannot be cut off.

2. Hath God taken away thy only child? He hath given thee his only Son: this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses, that hath Christ? He is his father's brightness, *Heb. ii. 3.* His riches, *Col. ii. 9.* His delight, *Pf. xlii. 1.* Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? And is there not enough in him to ravish us with holy delight? He is wisdom to teach us, righteousness to acquit us, sanctification to adorn us: he is that royal and princely gift; he is the bread of angels, the joy and triumph of saints, he is *all in all*, *Col. iii. 10.* Why then art thou discontented? Though thy child be lost, yet thou hast him for whom all things are lost.

7. And last reply. Let us blush to think that nature should outstrip grace. *Poivillus* an heathen,

heathen, when he was about to consecrate a temple to *Jupiter*, and news was brought him of the death of his son, would not desist from his enterprize, but with much composure of mind gave order for decent burial.

§. 2. *The second apology answered.*

2. Apology that *discontent* makes, is, *I have a great part of my estate strangely melted away, and trading begins to fail.*

God is pleased sometimes to bring his children very low, and cut them short in their estate; it fares with them as with that widow, who had nothing in her house save a pot of oil, 2 *Kings* iv. 2. But be content.

*Reply 1.* God hath taken away your estate but not your portion. This is a sacred paradox, honour and estate are no part of a christian's jointure; they are rather accessories than essentials, and are extrinsecal and foreign; therefore the loss of those cannot denominate a man miserable, still the portion remains; *the Lord is my portion, saith my soul*, Lam. iii. 24. Suppose one were worth a million of money, and he should chance to lose a pin off his sleeve, this is no part of his estate, nor can we say he is undone: the loss of sublunary comforts is not so much to a christian's portion, as the loss of a pin is to a million. *These things shall be added to you*, Matth. iv. 32. *Adjicientur*, they shall be cast in as overplus. When a man buys a piece of cloth, he hath an inch or two given in to the measure: now, though he lose his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone; for still the whole piece remains: our outward estate is not so much in regard of the portion, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece; why then should a christian be discontented, when the title to his spiritual treasure remains? A thief may take away all the money that I have about me, but not my land; still a christian hath a title to the land of promise. *Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.*

*Reply 2.* Perhaps, if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost: outward comforts do often quench inward heat. God can bestow a jewel upon us, but we fall so in love with it, that we forget him that gave it. What pity is it that we should commit idolatry with the creature! God is forced sometimes to drain away an estate; the plate and jewels are often cast overboard to save the passenger. Many a man may curse the time that ever he had such an estate, it hath been an enchantment to draw a-

way his heart from God. *Some there are that will be rich*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. *And they fall into a snare.* Art thou troubled that God hath prevented a snare? Riches are thorns, *Matth.* xiii. 7. Art thou angry because God hath pulled away a thorn from thee? Riches are compared to thick clay, *Hab.* ii. 6. Perhaps thy affections, which are the feet of the soul, might have stuck so fast in this golden clay, that they could not have ascended up to heaven. *Be content*; if God damm up our outward comforts, it is that the stream of our love may run faster another way.

*Reply 3.* If your estate be small, yet God can bless a little. 'Tis not how much money we have, but how much blessing. He that often curseth the bags of gold can bless the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse. What if thou hast not the full flesh-pots? Yet thou hast a promise, *I will bless her provision*, 1 *Pe.* cxxiii. 15. And then a little goes a great way, be content, thou hast the dew of a blessing distill'd; *a dinner of green herbs, where love is, is sweet*; I may add, *where the love of God is*. Another may have more estate than you, but more care; more riches, less rest; more revenues, but with all more occasions of expence: he hath a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give him power to eat thereof, *Eccl.* vi. 2. He hath the dominion of his estate, not the use; he holds more but enjoys less: in a word, thou hast less gold than he, perhaps less guilt.

4th. *Reply.* You did never so thrive in your spiritual trade; your heart was never so low, as since your condition was low; you were never so poor in spirit, never so rich in faith. You did never run the ways of God's commandments so fast as since some of your golden weights were taken off. You never had such trading for heaven all your life; this is *uberimus questus*. You did never make such adventures upon the promise as since you left off your sea-adventures. This is the best kind of merchandise; O christian, thou never had such incomes of the spirit, such spring-tides of joy; and what though weak in estate, if strong in assurance? Be content, what you have lost one way, you have gained another.

5. *Reply.* Be your losses what they will in this kind, remember in every loss there is only a suffering, but in every discontent there is a sin, and one sin is worse than a thousand sufferings. What? Because some of my revenues are



gone, shall I part with some of my righteousness? Shall my faith and patience go to? Because I do not possess an estate, shall I not the more possess my own spirit? O learn to be content.

3. *The third apology answered.*

The third apology is, *it is sad with me in my relations: where I should find most comfort, there I have most grief.* This apology or objection brancheth itself into two particulars, whereto I shall give a distinct reply.

1st branch, *my child goes on in rebellion; I fear I have brought forth a child for the devil.* It is indeed sad to think, that hell should be paved with the skulls of any of our children, and certainly the pangs of grief which the mother hath in this kind, are worse than her pangs of travail; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented: for consider,

1st. *Reply.* You may pick something out of your child's undutifulness; the child's sin is sometimes the parent's sermon: the undutifulness of children to us, may be a memento to put us in mind of our undutifulness once to God. Time was when we were rebellious children; how long did our hearts stand out as garrisons against God? How long did he parly with us, and beseech us, ere we would yield? He walked in the tenderness of his heart towards us, but we walked in the stwardness of our hearts towards him; and since grace hath been planted in our souls, how much of the wild olive is still in us? How many motions of the spirit do we daily resist? How many unkindnesses and affronts have we put upon Christ? Let this open a spring of repentance; look upon your child's rebellions and mourn for your own rebellion.

2d. *Reply.* Though to see him undutiful is your grief, yet not always your sin. Hath a parent given the child, not only the milk of the breast, but the sincere milk of the word? 1 Pet. ii. 2. Hast thou seasoned his tender years with religious education? Thou canst do no more; parents can only work knowledge, God must work grace; they can only lay the wood together; it is God must make it burn; a parent can only be a guide to shew his child the way to heaven, the spirit of God must be a loadstone to draw his heart into that way. *Am I in God's stead (with Jacob) who hath withheld the fruit of the womb?* Gen. xxx. 2. Can I give children? So, is a parent in God's stead to give grace? Who can help it, if a child hav-

ing the light of conscience, scripture-education, these three torches in his hand; yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of sin? Weep for thy child, pray for him; but do not sin for him by discontent.

*Reply 3.* Say not, you have brought forth a child for the devil; God can reduce him; he hath promised to turn the heart of the children to their parents, Mal. iv. 6. And to open springs of grace in the desert, Isa. xxxv. 6. When thy child is going full sail to the devil, God can blow with a contrary wind of his spirit, and alter his course. When Paul was breathing out persecution against the saints, and was sailing hell-ward, God turns him another way; before he was going to Damascus, God sends him to Annanias; before a persecutor, now a preacher. Though our children are for the present fallen into the devil's pond, God can turn them from the power of Satan, Acts xxiv. 16. And bring them in the twelfth hour. Monica was weeping for her son Augustine: at last God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous instrument in the church of God.

2. The second branch of the objection is, *but my husband takes ill courses; where I looked for honey, behold a sting.*

*Ans.* It is sad to have the living and the dead tied together; yet, let not your heart fret with discontent; mourn for his sins, but do not murmur. For,

*Reply 1.* God hath placed you in your relation and you cannot be discontented, but you quarrel with God. What? For every cross that befalls us, shall we call the infinite wisdom of God in question? O the blasphemy of our hearts!

*Reply 2.* God can make you a gainer by your husband's sin: perhaps you had never been so good, if he had not been so bad. The fire burns hottest in the coldest climate: God often by a divine antiperistasis turns the sins of others to our good, and makes our maladies our medicines. The more prophane the husband is, oft the more holy the wife grows; the more earthly he is, the more heavenly she grows; God makes sometimes the husband's sin a spur to the wife's grace. His exorbitancies are as a pair of bellows to blow up the flame of her zeal and devotion the more.

Is it not thus? Doth not thy husband's wickedness send thee to prayer? Thou perhaps had never prayed so much, if he had not sinned so much.

much. His deadness quickens thee the more, the stone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The apostle saith, *the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband*, 1 Cor. vii. 14. But in this sense, the believing wife is sanctified by the unbelieving husband, she grows better; his sin is a whetstone to her grace, and a medicine for her security.

§. 4. *The fourth apology answered.*

The next apology that discontent makes, is, *but my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false.*

*Ans.* It is sad when a friend proves like a brook in summer, *Job vi. 15.* The traveller, being parched with heat, comes to the brook, hoping to refresh himself; but the brook is dried up: yet be content.

*Reply 1.* Thou art not alone, others of the saints have been betrayed by friends; and when they have leaned upon them, they have been as a foot out of joint. This was true in the type *David*, *Pf. lv. 12, 13.* *It was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou, a man, my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together:* and in the anti-type Christ, he was betrayed by a friend; and why should we think it strange to have the same measure dealt out to us a *Jesus Christ* had? *The servant is not above his master.*

*Reply 2.* A christian may often read his sin in his punishment; hath not he dealt treacherously with God? How oft hath he grieved the comforter, broken his vows, and through unbelief sided with Satan against God? How oft hath he abused love, taking the jewels of God's mercies, and making a golden calf of them, serving his own lusts? How oft hath he made the free grace of God, which should have been a bolt to keep out sin, rather a key to open the door to it? These wounds hath the Lord received in the house of his friends, *Zech. xiii. 6.* Look upon the unkindness of thy friend, and mourn for thy own unkindness against God: shall a christian condemn that in another, which he hath been too guilty of himself?

*Reply 3.* Hath thy friend proved treacherous? Perhaps you did repose too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon a house than the pillars will bear, it must needs break. God saith, *trust ye not in a friend*, *Micah vii. 5.* Perhaps you did put more trust in him, than you did dare to put in God. Friends are as *Venice-glasses*; we may use them, but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break:

behold matter of humility, but not of fullness and discontent.

*Reply 4.* You have a friend in heaven will never fail you; *there is a friend* (saith *Solomon*) *that sticketh closer than a brother*; *Prov. xviii. 24.* Such a friend is God; he is very studious and inquisitive in our behalf; he hath a debating with himself, a consulting and projecting, how he may do us good; he is the best friend which may give contentment in the midst of all discourtesies of friends.

Consider, 1. He is a loving friend. God is love, 1 *John iv. 16.* Hence he is said sometimes to engrave us on the palm of his hand, *Isa. xlix. 16.* That he may be never out of his eye, and to carry us in his bosom, *Isa. xl. 11.* Near to his heart. There is no stop or stint in his love; but as the river *Nilus*, it overflows all the banks; his love is as far beyond our thoughts, as it is above our deserts. O the infinite love of God, in giving the son of his love to be made flesh, which was more than if all the angels had been made worms! God in giving Christ to us gave his very heart to us; here is love pensil'd out in all its glory, and engraven as with the point of a diamond. All other love is hatred in comparison of the love of our friend.

2. He is a careful friend; *he careth for you*, 1 *Pet. v. 7.* (1.) He minds and transacts our business as his own, he accounts his peoples interests and concerns as his interest. (2.) He provides for us, grace to enrich us, glory to enoble us: it was *David's* complaint, *no man cared for my soul*, *Pf. cxlii. 4.* A christian hath a friend that cares for him.

3. He is a prudent friend, *Dan. ii. 20.* A friend may sometimes err through ignorance or mistake, and give his friend poison instead of sugar; but *God is wise in heart*, *Job ix. 4.* He is skilful as well as faithful; he knows what our disease is, and what physic is most proper to apply; he knows what will do us good, and what wind will be best to carry us to heaven.

4. He is a faithful friend, *Deut. vii. 9, 10.* And he is faithful, 1. In his promises, *in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie hath promised*, *Tit. i. 2.* God's people are children that will not lie, *Isa. lxiii. 8.* But God is a God that cannot lie: he will not deceive the faith of his people; nay, he cannot: he is called the truth; he can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. The Lord may sometimes change his promise (as when he converts a temporal promise



promise into a spiritual) but he can never break his promise.

5. He is a *compassionate* friend, hence in scripture we read of the *yearnings of his bowels*, Jer. xxxi. 20. God's friendship is nothing else but compassion; for there is naturally no affection in us to desire his friendship, nor no goodness in us to deserve it; the loadstone is in himself. When we were full of blood, he was full of bowels; when we were enemies, he sent an embassy of peace; when our hearts were turned back from God, his heart was turned towards us. O the tenderness and sympathy of our friend in heaven! We ourselves have some relentings of heart to those which are in misery; but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us, therefore he is called the *Father of mercies*, 2 Cor. i. 3.

6. He is a *constant* friend. His *compassions fail not*, Lam. iii. 22. Friends do often in adversity drop off as leaves in autumn. *Amici circa sartaginem*, as *Plutarch* saith; these are rather flatterers than friends. *Joah* was for a time faithful to king *David's* house, he went not after *Abshalom's* treason; but within a while proved false to the crown, and went after the treason of *Adonijah*, 1 Kings i. 7. God is a friend for ever, *having loved his own, he loved them to the end*, John xiii. 1. What though I am despised; yet God loves me: what tho' my friends cast me off? Yet God loves me; he loves to the end, and there is no end of that love.

This methinks, in case of discourtesies and unkindnesses, is enough to charm down discontent.

#### §. 5. The fifth apology answered.

The next apology is, *I am under great reproaches*. Let not this discontent; For,

*Ans.* 1. It is a sign there is some good in thee. Saith *Socrates*, what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? The applause of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their censure imports some good, *Pf.* xxxviii. 20. *David* wept and fasted, and that was turned to his *reproach*, *Pf.* lxi. 10. As we must pass to heaven through the pikes of suffering, so through the clouds of reproach.

*Reply* 2. If your reproach be for God, as *David's* was, *for thy sake I have born reproach*, *Pf.* lxi. 7. Then it is rather matter of triumph, than dejection: Christ doth not say, when you are reproached, *be discontented*; but *rejoice*, *Matth.* v. 12. Wear your reproach as a diadem

of honour, for now a spirit of glory rests upon you, 1 Pet. iv. 14. Put your reproaches into the inventory of your riches; so did *Moses*, Heb. xi. 26. It should be a christian's ambition to wear his Saviour's livery, though it be sprinkled with blood and sullied with disgrace.

3. *Reply*. God will do us good by reproach; as *David* said of *Shimei* his cursing, *it may be the Lord will requite good for his cursing this day*, 2 Sam. xvi. 12. This puts us upon searching out sin. A child of God labours to read his sin in every stone of reproach that is cast at him; besides, now we have an opportunity to exercise patience and humility.

*Reply* 4. Jesus Christ was content to be reproached for us; *he despised the shame of the cross*, Heb. xi. 2. It may amaze us to think, that he who was God could endure to be spit upon, to be crowned with thorns, *in a kind of jeer*; and when he was ready to bow his head upon the cross, to have the Jews in scorn, wag their heads, and say, *he saved others, himself he cannot save*. The shame of the cross was as much as the blood of the cross; his name was crucified before his body. The sharp arrows of reproach, that the world did shoot at Christ, went deeper into his heart than the spear; his suffering was so ignominious, that as if the sun did blush to behold, it withdrew its bright beams, and masked itself with a cloud; (and well it might when the sun of righteousness was in an eclipse;) all this contumely and reproach did the God of glory endure, or rather *despise* for us. Oh then, let us be content to have our names eclipsed for Christ; let not reproach ly at our heart, but let us bind it as a crown about our head. Alas, what is reproach? This is but *small shot*, how will men stand in the mouth of a cannon? Those who are discontented at a reproach, will be offended at a faggot.

*Reply* 5. Is not many a man contented to suffer reproach for maintaining his lust? And shall not we for maintaining the truth? Some glory in that which is their shame, *Phil.* iii. 19. And shall we be ashamed of that which is our glory? Be not troubled at these petty things: he whose heart is once divinely touched with the loadstone of God's spirit, doth account it his honour to be dishonoured for Christ, *Aets.* xv. 4. And doth as much despise the world's censure, as he doth their praise.

*Reply* 6. We live in an age, wherein men dare reproach God himself. The divinity of the

the Son of God is blasphemously reproached by the *Socinian*; the blessed *Bible* is reproached by the *Antiscripturist*, as if it were but a *legend of lies*, and every man's faith a fable; the justice of God is called to the bar of reason by the *Arminians*; the wisdom of God, in his providential actings, is taxed by the *Atheist*; the ordinances of God are decreed by the *Famalist*, as being too heavy a burden for a free-born conscience, and too low and carnal for a sublime seraphic spirit; the ways of God, which have the majesty of holiness shining in them, are calumniated by the *profane*; the mouths of men are open against God, as if he were an hard master, and the path of religion too strict and severe. If men cannot give God a good word, shall we be discontented or troubled, that they speak hardly of us? Such as labour to bury the glory of religion, shall we wonder that their throats are open sepulchres, *Rom. iii. 31.* to bury our good name? Oh let us be contented, while we are in God's scouring-house, to have our names sullied a little; the blacker we seem to be here, the brighter shall we shine when God hath set us upon the celestial shelf.

§ 6. *The sixth apology answered.*

The sixth apology that discontent makes, is, disrespect in the world. *I have not that esteem from men as is suitable to my quality and graces.* And doth this trouble? Consider,

*Reply 1.* The world is an unequal judge; as it is full of change, so of partiality. The world gives her respects, as she doth her places of preferment; more by favour often, than desert. Hast thou the ground of real worth in thee? That is best worth that is in him that hath it; honour is in him that gives it; better deserve respect, and not have it; than have it, and not deserve it.

*Reply 2.* Hast thou grace; God respects thee, and his judgment is best worth prising. A believer is a person of honour, being born of God. Since thou wast precious in mine eyes, *thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, Isa. xliii. 4.* Let the world think what they will of you; perhaps in their eyes you are a *cast-away*; in God's eyes a dove, *Cant. ii. 14.* A spouse, *Cant. v. 1.* A jewel, *Mal. iii. 17.* Others account you the dregs and off-scouring of the world, *1 Cor. iv. 14.* But God will give *whole kingdoms for your ransom, Isa. xliii. 5.* Let this content: no matter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world, if I am *rectus in curia*, God thinks well of me. It is better

that God approve, than man applaud. The world may put us in their *rubric*, and God puts us in his black-book. What is a man the better that his fellow-prisoners commend him, if his judge condemn him? Oh labour to keep in with God, prize his love: Let my fellow-subjects frown; I am contented, being a favourite of the king of heaven.

*Reply 3.* If we are the children of God, we must look for disrespect; a believer is in the world, but not of the world: we are here in a pilgrim condition, out of our own country, therefore must not look for the respects and acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own country, *Heb. xiii. 14.* It is dangerous to be the world's favourite.

*Reply 4.* Discontent arising from disrespect, favours too much of pride; an humble christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, he cries out, as *Agur, I am more brutish than any man, Prov. xxx. 2.* And therefore is contented, though he be set among the *dregs of the flock, Job xxx. 1.* Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankful that he is not laid in the *lowest bell, Psal. lxxxvi. 13.* A proud man sets an high value upon himself; and is angry with others, because they will not come up to his price. Take heed of pride: *O had others a window to look into thy breast, (as Grates once expressed it) or did thy heart stand where thy face doth, thou wouldest wonder to have so much respect.*

§ 7. *The seventh apology answered.*

The next apology is, *I meet with very great sufferings for the truth.* Consider,

*Reply 1.* Your sufferings are not so great as your sins: put these two in the balance, and see which weighs heaviest; where sin lies heavy, sufferings ly light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins; he looks upon one at the great end of the perspective, but upon the other at the little end of the perspective. The carnal heart cries out, take away the frogs; but a gracious heart cries out, take away the iniquity, *2 Sam. xxiv. 10.* The one faith, never any one suffered as I have done; but the other faith, never one sinned as I have done, *Micah vii. 9.*

*Reply 2.* Art thou under sufferings; thou hast an opportunity to shew the valour and constancy of thy mind. Some of God's saints



would have accounted it a great favour to have been honoured with martyrdom. One said, I am in prison till I am in prison. Thou countest that a trouble, which others would have worn as an ensign of their glory.

Reply 3. Even those who have gone only upon moral principles, have shewn much constancy and contentment in their sufferings. *Curtius*, being bravely mounted, and in armour, threw himself into a great gulf, that the city of *Rome* might, according to the oracle, be delivered from the pestilence. And we having a divine oracle, *that they who kill the body cannot hurt the soul*, shall we not with much constancy and patience devote ourselves to injuries for religion, and rather suffer for the truth, than the truth suffer for us? The *Decii* among the *Romans* vowed themselves to death, that their legions and soldiers might be crowned with the honour of the victory. O what should we be content to suffer, to make the truth victorious! *Regulus* having sworn that he would return to *Carthage* (though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there) yet not daring to infringe his oath, he did adventure to go; we then who are christians, having made a vow to Christ in baptism, and so often renewed it in the blessed sacrament, should with much contentation rather choose to suffer, than violate our sacred oath. Thus the blessed martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulness did they yield up their souls to God? And when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the body, let them not the mind, through discontent; shew by your heroic courage, that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

§ 8. *The eight apology answered.*

The next apology is, *the prosperity of the wicked*. *Ans.* I confess it is so often, that the evil enjoy all the good, and the good endure all the evil. *David* though a good man, stumbled at this, and had like to have fallen. *Ps* lxxiii. 2. Well, be contented; for remember,

1. These are not the only things, nor the best things; they are mercies without the pale: these are but acorns with which God feeds swine; you who are believers have more choice fruit, the *olive*, the *pomegranate*, the fruit which grows on the *true vine* Jesus Christ: others have the fat of the earth, you have the dew of ven; they have a south-land, you have those

springs of living water which are clarified with Christ's blood, and indulcerated with his love.

Reply 2. To see the wicked flourish is matter rather of pity than envy; it is all the heaven they must have. *We to you rich men, for you have received your consolation*, Luke vi. 24. Hence it was that *David* made it his solemn prayer, *Deliver me from the wicked, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure*, *Ps* xvii. 14. The words (methinks) are *David's* litany; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, good Lord deliver me. When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The world is first musical, and then tragical: if you would have a man fry and blaze in hell, let him have enough of the fat of the earth. O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out of the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial. Therefore as that soldier said to his fellow, do you envy my grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them; so I say, do you envy the wicked. Alas! their prosperity is like *Haman's* banquet before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the gallows through pleasant fields and fine galleries, or to see him go up the ladder in cloaths of gold? The wicked may flourish in their bravery a while; but, *when they flourish as the grass, it is, that they shall be destroyed for ever*, *Ps* xcii. 7. The proud grass shall be mown down. Whatever a sinner enjoys, he hath a curse with it, *Mal.* ii. 2. and shall we envy? What if poisoned bread be given the dogs? The long furrows in the backs of the godly have a seed of blessing in them, when the table of the wicked becomes a snare, and their honour their halter.

§ 9. *The ninth apology answered.*

9. The next apology that discontent makes for itself, is, the evils of the times. *The times are full of heresy and impiety, and this is that which troubles me*. This apology consists of two branches, to which I shall answer in specie; and,

Branch 1. *The times are full of heresy*. This is indeed sad; when the devil cannot by violence destroy the church, he endeavours to poison it; when he cannot with *Samson's* fox-tails set the corn on fire, then he sows tares; as he labours to destroy the peace of the church by

by division, so the truth of it by error: we may cry out with *Seneca, vere vivimus in temporum fecibus*, we live in times wherein there is a sluice open to all novel opinions, and every man's opinion is his bible. Well; this may make us mourn, but let us not murmur thro' discontent: consider,

*Reply 1.* Error makes a discovery of men.

1. Bad men; error discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the leprosy brake forth in the forehead, then was the leper discovered. Error is a spiritual bastard; the devil is the father, and pride the mother: you never knew an erroneous man, but he was a proud man. Now, it is good that such men should be laid open, to the intent, *First*, that God's righteous judgment upon them may be adored, *2 Thes. ii. 12.* *Secondly*, that others, who are free, be not infected. If a man have the plague, it is well it breaks forth: for my part, I would avoid an heretic, as I would avoid the devil, for he is sent on his errand. I appeal to you, if there were a tavern in this city, where under a pretence of selling wine, many hogheads of poison were to be sold, were it not well that others should know of it, that they might not buy? It is good that those that have poisoned opinions should be known, that the people of God may not come near either the scent or taste of that poison.

2. Error is a touch-stone to discover good men; it tries the gold, *There must be heresies, that they which are approved, may be made manifest. 1 Cor. xi. 14.* Thus our love to Christ and zeal for truth doth appear. God shews who are the living fish, *viz.* such as swim against the stream; who are the sound sheep, *viz.* such as feed in the green pastures of the ordinances; who are the doves, *viz.* such as live in the best air, where the spirit breathes; God sets a garland of honour upon these, *These are they which came out of great tribulation, Rev. vii. 14.* So these are they that have opposed the errors of the times, these are they that have preserved the virginity of their conscience; who have kept their judgment sound, and their heart soft. God will have a trophy of honour set upon some of his saints; they shall be renowned for their sincerity, being like the cypress, which keeps its greenness and freshness in the winter-season.

*Reply 2.* Be not sinfully discontented, for God can make the errors of the church advantageous to truth. Thus the truths of God have come

to be more beaten out and confirmed; as it is in the law, one man laying a false title to a piece of land, the true title hath by this means been the more searched into and ratified; some had never so studied to defend the truth by scripture, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by sophistry; all the mists and fogs of error that have risen out of the bottomless pit, have made the glorious sun of truth to shine so much the brighter. Had not *Arius* and *Sabellius* broached their damnable errors, the truth of those questions about the blessed trinity had never been so discussed and defended by *Athanasius*, *Augustin*, and others; had not the devil brought in so much of his princely darkness, the champions for truth had never run so fast to scripture to light their lamps. So that God hath a wheel within a wheel, overrules these things wisely, and turns them to the best. Truth is an heavenly plant, that settles by shaking.

*Reply 3.* God raiseth the price of his truth the more; the very shreds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is much counterfeit mettall abroad, we prize the true gold the more: pure wine of truth is never more precious, than when unsound doctrines are broached and vented.

*Reply 4.* Error makes us more thankful to God for the jewel of truth. When you see another infected with the plague, how thankful are you, that God hath freed you from the infection? When we see others have the *leprosie in the head*, how thankful are we to God that he hath not given us over to believe a lie, and so be damned? It is a good use that may be made even of the error of the times, when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free-grace of God, who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poison.

2. The second branch of the apology that discontent makes, is, the impiety of the times. I live and converse among the prophane; *O that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest, Ps. lv. 6.* *Ans.* It is indeed sad to be mixed with the wicked. *David beheld transgressors and was grieved, Ps. cxix. 58.* and *Lot* (who was a bright star in a dark night) was vexed, or as the word in the original may bear, *wearied out with the unclean conversation of the wicked, 2 Pet. ii. 7.* he made the sins of *Sodom* spears to pierce his own soul: we ought, if there be any spark of divine love in us, to be very sensible of the sins of others, and to



have our hearts bleed for them; yet let us not break forth into mourning or discontent, knowing that God in his providence hath permitted it, and surely not without some reasons; for,

*Reply 1.* The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly; the wise God often makes those who are wicked and peaceable, a means to safeguard his people from those who are wicked and cruel. The king of Babylon kept *Jeremy*, and gave special order for his looking to, that he did want nothing, *Jer. xxxix. 11. 12.* God sometimes makes brazen sinners to be brazen walls to defend his people.

*Reply 2.* God doth interline and mingle the wicked with the godly, that the godly may be a means to save the wicked; such is the beauty of holiness, that it hath a magnetical force in it to allure and draw even the wicked. Sometimes God makes a believing husband, a means to convert an unbelieving wife, and *e contra.* *What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 1 Cor. vii. 16.* The godly living among the wicked, by their prudent advice and pious example, have won them to the embracing of religion: if there were not some godly among the wicked, how in a probable way, without a miracle, can we imagine that the wicked should be converted? Those who are now shining saints in heaven, sometimes served diverse lusts, *Tim. iii. 3.* *Paul* once a persecutor; *Augustine* once a manichee; *Luther* once a monk; but by the severe and holy carriage of the godly, were converted to the faith.

§ 10. *The tenth apology answered.*

The next apology that discontent makes, is, lowness of parts and gifts; *I cannot (saith the christian) discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegance, as others.*

*Reply 1.* *Grace is beyond gifts;* thou comparest thy grace with another's gifts, there is a vast difference; grace without gifts is infinitely better than gifts without grace: in religion, the vitals are best; gifts are a more extrinsecal and common work of the spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more distinguishing work; and is a jewel hung only upon the elect. Hast thou the seed of God, the holy anointing? Be content.

1. Thou sayest, *Thou canst not discourse with that fluency as others.*

*Ans.* Experiments in religion are beyond no-

tions, and impressions beyond expressions. *Judas* (no doubt) could make a learned discourse of Christ, but well fared the woman in the gospel, that felt virtue coming out of him, *Luke viii. 47.* a sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. There is as much difference between gifts and graces, as between a tulip painted on the wall, and one growing in the garden.

2. Thou sayest, *Thou canst not pray with that elegance as others.*

*Ans.* Prayer is a matter more of the heart than the head: in prayer it is not so much fluency prevails, as fervency, *James v. 16.* nor is God so much taken with the elegance of speech, as the efficacy of the spirit. Humility is better than volubility; here the mourner is the orator; sighs and groans are the best rhetoric.

*Reply 2.* Be not discontented; for God doth usually proportion a man's parts to the place where he calls them: some are set in an higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities; but the most inferior member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

§ 11. *The eleventh apology answered.*

The next apology is, the troubles of the church. *Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for myself, as the public? The church of God suffers.*

*Ans.* I confess it is sad, and we ought for this to hang our harps upon the willows, *Ps. cxxxvii.* he is a wooden leg in Christ's body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a christian must not be proud flesh, so neither dead flesh. When the church of God suffers, he must sympathize; *Jeremiah wept for the virgin daughter of Sion.* We must feel our brethren's hard cords through our soft beds: in music, if one string be touched, all the rest sound; when God strikes upon our brethren, *our bowels must sound as an harp, Isa. xvi. 11.* be sensible, but not give way to discontent. For consider,

*Reply 1.* *God sits at the stern of his church,* *Ps. xli. 5.* Sometimes it is a ship tossed upon the waves, *O thou afflicted and tossed,* *Isa. liv. 12.* But cannot God bring this ship to haven, though it meet with a storm upon the sea? The ship in the gospel was tossed, because sin was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, because Christ was in it. Christ is in the ship of this church, fear not sinking; the church's anchor

chor is cast in heaven. Do not we think God loves his church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve tribes were on *Aaron's breast*, signifying how near to God's heart his people are; they are his portion, *Deut. xxxvii. 9.* and shall that be lost? His glory, *Isa. xli. 13.* and shall that be finally eclipsed? No certainly. God can deliver his church, not only from, but by opposition; the church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance.

Reply 2. *God hath always propagated religion by sufferings.* The foundation of the church hath been laid in blood; and these sanguine showers have ever made it more fruitful. *Cain* put the knife to *Abel's* throat, and ever since the church's veins have bled: but she is like the vine, which by bleeding grows; and like the palm-tree, which may have this motto *percutsa refurgit*; the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riseth. The holiness and patience of the saints, under their persecutions, hath much added both to the growth of religion, and the crown. *Basil* and *Tertullian* observe of the primitive martyrs, that divers of the heathens seeing their zeal and constancy, turned Christians. Religion is that *Phoenix* which hath always revived and flourished in the ashes of holy men. *Isaiah* sawn asunder, *Peter* crucified at *Jerusalem* with his head downwards; *Cyprian*, bishop of *Carthage*, *Polycarp*, of *Smyrna*, both martyred for religion; yet evermore the truth hath been sealed by blood, and gloriously dispersed; whereupon *Julian* did forbear to persecute, *non ex clementia sed invidia*; not out of pity, but envy; because the church grew so fast, and multiplied, as *Nazianzen* well observes.

§ 12. *The twelfth apology answered.*

The twelfth apology that discontent makes for itself, is this, *It is not my trouble that troubles me, but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent.*

*Ans.* Be sure it be so; do not prevaricate with God and thy own soul: in true mourning for sin, when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed: but suppose the apology be real, the sin is the ground of your discontent; yet I answer, a man's disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds, in these three cases.

1. When it is disheartning, that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. If *Israel* had only pored upon their sting; and not looked up to

the brazen serpent, they had never been healed. That sorrow for sin which drives us away from God, is not without sin, for there is more despair in it than remorse; the soul hath so many tears in its eyes, that it cannot see Christ. Sorrow, as sorrow, doth not save (that were to make a Christ of our tears) but is useful, as it is preparatory in the soul, making sin vile, and Christ precious. Oh look up to the brazen serpent, the Lord Jesus; a sight of his blood will revive, the medicine of his merits is broader than our sore.

It is Satan's policy, either to keep us from seeing our sins, or, if we will needs see them, that we may be swallowed up of sorrow, *2 Cor. ii. 7.* either he would stupify us, or affright us; either keep the glass of the law from our eyes, or else pencil out our sins in such crimson colours that we may sink in the quicksands of despair.

2. When sorrow is indisposing, it untunes the heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloisters up the soul. This is not sorrow but rather fullness, and doth render a man not so much penitential as cynical.

3. When it is out of season; God bids us rejoice, and we *hang our harps upon the willows*; he bids us trust, and we cast ourselves down, and are brought even to the margin of despair. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be sure to put us upon it when it is least in season.

When God calls us in a special manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white robes, and Satan will be putting us into mourning, and instead of a garment of praise, clothe us with a spirit of heaviness; so God loseth the acknowledgment of mercy, and we the comfort.

If thy sorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Christ, if it hath raised in thee high prizings of him, strong hungerings after him, sweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a christian doth but sin to vex and torture himself further upon the wrack of his own discontent.

And thus I hope I have answered the most material objections and apologies which this sin of discontent doth make for itself. I see no reason why a christian should be discontented, unless for his discontent. Let me, in the next place, propound something which may be both as a loadstone and a whetstone to contentation.



CHAP. XI. *Divine motives to contentment.*

And so I proceed to the arguments or motives that may quicken to contentment.

§ 1. *The first argument to contentation,*

I. Consider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent, if I could prescribe a receipt or antidote against poverty: but behold, here is that which is more excellent, for a man to want, and yet have enough, this alone contentment of spirit doth bring. Contentation is a remedy against all our troubles, a levamen to all our burdens, it is the cure of care. Contentation, though it be not properly a grace, (it is rather a disposition of mind) yet in it there is a happy temperance and mixture of all the graces: it is a most precious compound which is made of faith, patience, meekness, humility, &c. Which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are in specie these seven rare excellencies in contentment.

1. *Excellency*, a contented christian carries heaven about him: for, what is heaven, but that sweet repose and full contentment that the soul shall have in God? In contentment there is the first-fruits of heaven. There are two things in a contented spirit, which makes it like heaven. (1.) *God is there*; something of God is to be seen in that heart. A discontented christian is like a rough tempestuous sea; when the water is rough, you can see nothing there; but when it is smooth and serene, then you may behold your face in the water, *Prov. xxvii. 19.* When the heart rageth through discontent, it is like a rough sea; you can see nothing there, unless passion and murmuring; there is nothing of God, nothing of heaven in that heart: but by virtue of contentment, it is like the sea when it is smooth and calm, there is a face shining there; you may see something of Christ in that heart, a representation of all the graces. (2.) *Rest is there.* O what a sabbath is kept in a contented heart! What an heaven! A contented christian is like *Noah* in the ark; though the ark were tossed with waves, *Noah* could sit and sing in the ark. The soul that is gotten into the ark of *contentment*, sits quiet, and sails above all the waves of trouble; he can sing in this spiritual ark: the wheels of the chariot move, but the axle-tree stirs not; the circumference of the heavens is carried about the earth, but the earth moves not out of its centre. When we meet with motion and change in

the creatures round about us, a contented spirit is not stirred or moved out of its centre. The sails of a mill move with the wind, but the mill it self stands still; an emblem of contentment: when our outward estate moves with the wind of providence, yet the heart is settled through holy contentment; and when others are like quick-silver, shaking and trembling through disquiet, the contented spirit can say, as *David*, *O God, my heart is fixed*, Ps. lvii. 7. What is this but a piece of heaven?

2. *Excellency*, whatever is defective in the creature, is made up in contentment. A christian may want the comforts that others have, the land, and possessions; but God hath distill'd into his heart that contentment which is far better: in this sense, that is true of our Saviour, *he shall have in this life an hundred-fold*, Mat. xix. 29. Perhaps he that ventured all for *Christ*, never hath his house or land again: ay, but God gives him a contented spirit; and this breeds such joy in the soul, as is infinitely sweeter than all his houses and lands which he left for *Christ*. It was said with *David* in regard of his outward comforts, he being driven (as some think) from his kingdom; yet, in regard of that sweet contentment he found in God, he had more comfort than men use to have in the time of *harvest and vintage*, Ps. iv. 7. One man hath house and lands to live upon, another hath nothing, only a small trade; yet even that brings in a livelihood. A christian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment; and so he knows as well how to *want*, as to *abound*. O the rare *art*, or rather *miracle* of contentment! wicked men are often disquieted in the enjoyment of all things; the contented christian is well in the want of all things.

*Q. But how comes a christian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts?*

*Ans.* A christian finds contentment distilled out of the breasts of the promises. He is poor in purse, but rich in promise. There is one promise brings much sweet contentment into the soul. *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*, Ps. xxxiv. 10. If the thing we desire be good for us, we shall have it; if it be not good, then the not having it, is good for us. The resting satisfied with the promise gives contentment.

3. *Excellency*, contentment makes a man in tune to serve God; it oils the wheels of the soul, and makes it more agil and nimble; it

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composeth the heart, and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, &c. How can he that is in a passion of grief, or discontent, *serve God without distraction*? 1 Cor. vii. 35. Contentment doth prepare and tune the heart. First you prepare the viol, and wind up the strings, ere you play a fit of music; when a christian's heart is wounded up to this heavenly frame of contentment, then it is fit for duty. A discontented christian is like *Saul*, when the evil spirit came upon him; O what jarings and discords doth he make in prayer! When an army is put into a disorder, then it is not fit for battle; when the thoughts are scattered and distracted about the cares of this life, a man is not fit for devotion. Discontent takes the heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the present trouble, so that a man's mind is not upon his prayer, but upon his cross.

Discontent doth disjoint the soul, and it is impossible now that a christian should go so steadily and cheerfully in God's service: O how lame is his devotion! The discontented person gives God but a half duty, and his religion is nothing but *bodily exercise*, it wants a soul to animate it. *David* would not offer that to God which *cost him nothing*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Where there is too much worldly care, there is too little spiritual cost in a duty. The discontented person doth his duties by halves; he is just like *Ephraim*, *a cake not turned*, Hof. vii. 8. He is a cake baked on one side, he gives God the outside, but not the spiritual part; his heart is not in duty, he is baked on one side, but the other side dough; and what profit is there of such raw indigested services? He that gives God only the skin of worship, what can he expect more than the shell of comfort? *Contentment* brings the heart into frame; and then only do we give God the flower and spirits of a duty, when the soul is composed: now a christian doth *rem agere*, his heart is intent and serious. There are some duties which we cannot perform as we ought without contentment; as, (1.) *To rejoice in God*. How can he rejoice that is discontented? He is fitter for repining, than rejoicing. (2.) *To be thankful for mercy*. Can a discontented person be thankful? He can be *freiful*, not *thankful*. (3.) *To justify God in his proceedings*, Ezra ix. 23. How can he do this who is discontented with his condition? He will sooner censure God's wisdom, than clear his justice. Oh then, how excellent is *contentment*, which doth prepare, and, as it were,

string the heart for duty? Indeed contentment doth not only make our duties, lively and agile, but *acceptable*. It is this that puts beauty and worth into them; for *contentment settles* the soul: now, as it is with milk, when it is always stirring, you can make nothing of it, but let it settle a while, and then it turns to cream: when the heart is overmuch stirred with disquiet and discontent, you can make nothing of those duties: how thin, how fleeting and jejune are they? But when the heart is once *settled* by holy contentment, now there is some worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4. *Excellency*, contentment is the spiritual arch, or pillar of the soul; it fits a man to bear burdens; he whose heart is ready to sink under the least sin, by virtue of this hath a spirit invincible under sufferings. A contented christian is like the *camomile*, the more it is trodden upon, the more it grows; as physic works diseases out of the body, so doth contentment work trouble out of the heart. Thus it argues, if I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; if I am in want, God can relieve me. *Ye shall not see wind nor rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water*, 2 Kings iii. 17. Thus holy contentment keeps the heart from fainting; in the *autumn*, when the fruit and leaves are blown off, still there is sap in the root: when there is an *autumn* upon our external felicity, the leaves of our estate drop off, still there is the sap of contentment in the heart; and a christian hath life inwardly, when his outward comforts do not blossom. The contented heart is never out of heart. Contentation is a golden shield, that doth beat back discouragements. Humility is like the lead to the net, which keeps the soul down when it is rising through passion; and contentment is like the cork, which keeps the heart up when the heart is sinking through discouragement. Contentment is the great under-prop; it is like the beam which bears whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a rock that breaks the waves.

It is strange, to observe the same affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themselves under it. The contented christian is like *Sampson*, that carried away the gates of the city upon his back, *Jud. xvi. 3*. he can go away with his cross cheerfully, and makes nothing of it; the other is like *Issachar* couching down under his burden, *Gen. xlix. 14*. The reason is, the one is content, and that breeds courage; the other discontented, and that



that breeds fainting. Discontent swells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this sacred sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go limping under our afflictions, we know not what burdens God may exercise us with; let us therefore preserve contentment: as is our contentment, such will be our courage. *David* with his five stones and his sling defied *Goliath*, and overcame him. Get but contentment into the sling of your heart; and with this sacred stone you may both defy the world and conquer it; you may break those afflictions, which else will break you.

5. *Excellency* is, contentment prevents many sins and tentations.

*First*, it prevents many sins. Where there wants contentment, there wants no sin; discontentedness with our condition, is a sin that doth not go alone, but is like the first link of the chain, which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, there are two sins which contentation prevents. (I.) *Impatience*. Discontent and impatience are two twins; *this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?* 2 Kings vi. 33. As if God were so tied, that he must give us the mercy just when we desire. Impatience is no small sin; as will appear, if you consider whence it ariseth: as, (1.) *It is for want of faith*. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent grace; it believes that God's wisdom tempers, and his love sweetens all ingredients; this works patience; *Shall I not drink the cup which my father hath given me?* Impatience is the daughter of infidelity. If a patient have an ill opinion of the physician, and conceits that he comes to poison him, he will take none of his receipts. When we have a prejudice against God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we storm, and cry out like a foolish man (it is *Chryssostom's* simile) that cries out, away with the plaister, though it be in order to a cure; is it not better that the plaister smart a little, than the wound fester and rankle? (2.) *Impatience is for want of love to God*. We will bear his reproofs whom we love, not only patiently, but thankfully, *Love thinks no evil*, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. It puts the fairest and most candid gloss upon the actions of a friend, *Love covers evil*. If it were possible, for God in the least manner to err (which were blasphemy to think) Love would cover that error; love takes every thing in the best sense, it makes us bear any stroke, *It en-*

*dureth all things*, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Had we love to God, we should have patience.

(3.) *Impatience is for want of humility*. The impatient man was never humbled under the burden of sin; he that studies his sins, the numberless number of them, how they are twisted together, and sadly accented, is patient, and saith, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him*, Mic. i. 9. The greater noise drowns the lesser; when the sea roars, the rivers are still: he that lets his thoughts expatiate about sin, is both silent and amazed; he wonders it is no worse with him. How great then is this sin of impatience! And how excellent is *contentation*, which is a *superfedas* or counterpoise against this sin? The contented christian believing that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to say, unless to justify God, *Pf. li. 4*. That is the sin that contentation, prevents. II. It prevents murmuring, a sin which is a degree higher than the other; murmuring is quarrelling with God, and inveighing against him, *they spake against God*, Numb. xxi. 5. The murmurer saith interpretatively, that God hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deserved better from him. The murmurer chargeth God with folly; this is the language, or rather blasphemy of a murmuring spirit, God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The *Israelites* are called in the same text murmurers and rebels, Numb. xvii. 10. And is not rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? Thou that art a murmurer art in the account of God as a witch, a forcerer, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude; murmuring oft ends in cursing: *Micha's* mother fell to cursing when the talents of silver were taken away, *Judges* xvii. 2. So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away: our murmuring is the devil's music; this is that sin which God cannot bear; *how long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?* Numb. xiv. 7. It is a sin which whets the sword against a people, it is a land-destroying sin; *murmur ye not as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer*, 1 Cor. x. 10. It is a ripening sin this, without mercy, it will hasten *England's* funerals. O then how excellent is *contentation*, which prevents this sin? To be contented, and yet murmur, is a solecism; a contented Christian doth acquiesce in his present

sent condition, and doth not murmur, but admire. Herein appears the excellency of contentation, it is a spiritual antidote against sin.

*Secondly*, Contentment prevents many temptations; discontent is a devil that is always tempting. 1. *Tempt.* It puts a man upon indirect means. He that is poor and discontented, will attempt any thing; he will go to the devil for riches; he that is proud and discontented will hang himself, as *Ahitophel* did when his counsel was rejected. Satan takes great advantage of our discontent; he loves to fish in these troubled waters. Discontent doth both eclipse reason and weaken faith; and it is Satan's policy, he doth usually break over the hedge where it is weakest. Discontent makes a breach in the soul, and usually at this breach the devil enters by a temptation, and storms the soul. How easily can the devil by his logic dispute a discontented christian into sin? He forms such a syllogism as this, He that is in want must study self-preservation. But you are now in want, therefore you ought to study self-preservation. Hereupon, to make good his conclusion, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not distinguishing between what is needful, and what is lawful. What? saith he, dost thou want a livelihood? Never be such a fool as starve; take the rising side at a venture, be it good or bad, *eat the bread of deceit, drink the wine of violence.* Thus you see how the discontented man is a prey to that sad temptation, *Prov. xxx. 9. To steal and take God's name in vain.* Contentation is a shield against temptation; for he that is contented, knows as well how to want as to abound. He will not sin to get a living; though the bill of fare grows short, he is content. He lives as the birds of the air upon God's providence, and doubts not but he shall have enough to pay for his passage to heaven. 2. *Tempt.* Discontent tempts a man to atheism and apostacy. Sure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he suffer them to be in want who have walked *mournfully before him*, *Mal. iii. 14.* saith discontent. Throw off Christ's livery, desist from thy religion. Thus *Job's* wife, being discontented with her condition, saith to her husband, *Dost thou still retain thy integrity?* *Job. ii. 9.* As if he had said, dost thou not see, *Job*, what is become of all thy religion? *Thou fearest God and eschewest evil*, and what art thou the better? See how God

turns his hand against thee; he hath smitten thee in thy body, estate, relations, and *dost thou still retain thy integrity?* What? still devout? Still weep and pray before him? Thou fool, cast off religion, turn atheist. Here was a sore temptation that the devil did hand over to *Job* by his discontented wife; only his grace, as a golden shield, did ward off the blow from his heart? *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women.* What profit is it, saith the discontented person, to *serve the amighty?* Those that never trouble themselves about religion, are the prosperous men, and I in the mean while suffer want: as good give over driving the trade of religion, if this be all my reward. This is a sore temptation, and oft it prevails; atheism is the fruit that grows out of the blossom of discontent. Oh then, behold the excellency of contentment; it doth repel this temptation. If God be mine, saith the contented spirit, it is enough; though I have no lands or tenements, his smile makes heaven; *his loves are better than wine; better is the gleanings of Ephraim than the vintage of Abiezer*, *Judges viii.* 2. I have little in hand, but much in hope; my livelihood is short, but this is his promise, *even eternal life*, 1 *John ii. 25.* I am pursued by malice: but better is persecuted godliness, than prosperous wickedness. Thus divine contentment is a spiritual antidote both against sin and temptation.

6. *Excellency*, contentment sweetens every condition. Christ tuned the water into wine; so contentment turns the waters of *Marah* into spiritual wine. Have I but little? Yet it is more than I can deserve or challenge. This modicum is in mercy; it is the fruit of Christ's blood, it is the legacy of free-grace: a small present sent from a king is highly valued; this little I have is with a good conscience. It is not stollen waters; guilt hath not muddied or poisoned it; it runs pure. This little is a pledge of more; this bit of bread is an earnest of that bread which I shall eat in the kingdom of God. This little water in the cruise is an earnest of that heavenly nectar, which shall be distilled from the true vine. Do I meet with some crosses? my comfort is, if they be heavy, I have not far to go; I shall but carry my cross to *Golgotha*, and there I shall leave it; my cross is light in regard of the weight of glory. Hath God taken away my comforts from me! It is well, the comforter still abides. Thus contentment as an honey-comb drops sweetness into every



condition. Discontent is a leaven that sowres every comfort, it puts aloes and wormwood upon the breast of the creature, it lessens every mercy, it troubles every cross; but the contented spirit sucks sweetness from every flower of providence, it can make a treacle of poison. Contentation is full of consolation.

7. *Excellency*, Contentment hath this excellency, it is the best *commentator* upon providence; it makes a fair interpretation of all God's dealings. Let the providence of God be never so dark or bloody, contentment doth construe them ever in the best sense. I may say of it, as the apostle of charity, *it thinks no evil*, 1 Cor. i. 3. Sickness (saith contentment) is God's furnace, to refine his gold, and make it sparkle the more; the prison is an oratory, or house of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from me? He saw perhaps my heart grew so much in love with it; had I been long in that fat pasture, I should have surfeited; and the better my estate had been, the worse my soul would have been. God is wise; he hath done this, either to prevent some sin, or to exercise some grace. What a blessed frame of heart is this? A contented christian is an advocate for God against unbelief and impatience; whereas discontent takes every thing from God in the worst sense; it doth implead and censure God: this evil I feel is but a symptom of greater evil: God is but to undo me; *the Lord hath brought us hither into the wilderness to slay us*, Numb. xx. 4. The contented soul takes all well; and when his condition is never so bad, he can say, *yet God is good*, Ps. lxxiii. 1.

6. 2. *The second argument to contentment, is, a christian hath that which may make them content.*

1. Hath not God given thee Christ? In him there are unsearchable riches, *Eph. iii. 1*. He is such a golden mine of wisdom and grace, that all the saints and angels can never dig to the bottom. As *Seneca* said to his friend *Polybius*, never complain of thy hard fortune as long as *Cæsar* is thy friend: so I say to a believer, never complain as long as Christ is thy friend: he is an enriching pearl, a sparkling diamond; the infinite lustre of his merits makes us shine in God's eyes, *Eph. i. 7*. In him there is both *fulness* and *sweetness*; he is *unspeakably* good. Screw up your thoughts to the highest pinnacle, stretch them to the utmost period, let them expatiate to their full latitude and extent; yet they fall infinitely short of those ineffable and

inexhaustible treasures which are locked up in Jesus Christ: and is not here enough to give the soul content? A christian that wants necessities, yet having Christ, he hath the *one thing needful*.

2. Thy soul is exercised and enamelled with the graces of the spirit, and is not here enough to give contentment? Grace is of a divine birth; it is the new plantation; it is the flower of the heavenly paradise; it is the embroidery of the spirit. It is *the seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. 'Tis *the sacred unction*, 1 John i. 27. 'Tis Christ's portraiture in the soul; it is the very foundation on which the superstructure of glory is laid. O, of what infinite value is grace! What a jewel is faith? Well may it be called *precious* faith, 2 Pet. i. 1. What is love, but a divine sparkle in the soul? A soul beautified with grace, is like a room richly hung with arras, or tapestry, or the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. These are the true riches, *Luke xvi. 11*. Which cannot stand with reprobation; and is not here enough to give the soul contentment? What are all other things but like wings of a butterfly, curiously painted? But they defile our fingers. Earthly riches, saith *Augustine*, are full of poverty; so indeed they are. For, 1. They cannot enrich the soul; oftentimes under silken apparel, there is a threeed-bare soul. 2. These are corruptible: *riches are not for ever*, as the wise man saith, *Prov. xxvii. 24*. Heaven is a place where gold and silver will not go; a believer is rich towards God, *Luke xii. 21*. Why then art thou discontented? Hath not God given thee that which is better than the world? What if he doth not give thee the box, if he gives thee the jewel? What if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coin? He gives thee gold, *viz.* Spiritual mercies. What if the *water in the bottle be spent*? Thou hast enough in the fountain; what need he complain of the world's emptiness, that hath God's fulness? The Lord is *my portion*, saith *David*, Ps. xvi. 5. Then let the lines fall where they will, in a sick-bed or prison; I will say, *the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage*. 3. Art thou not heir to all the promises? Hast thou not a reversion of heaven? When thou lettest go thy hold of natural life, art thou not sure of eternal life? Hath not God given thee the earnest and first-fruits of glory? Is not here enough to work the heart to contentment.

§. 3. *The third argument is, be content, for else we confute our own prayers; we pray, thy will be done: it is the will of God that we should be in such a condition; he hath decreed it, and he sees it best for us: why then do we murmur, and are discontented at that which we pray for? Either we are not in good earnest in our prayer, which argues hypocrisy; or else we contradict ourselves, which argues folly.*

§. 4. *The fourth argument to contentment is, because now God hath his end, and Satan misseth of his end.*

1. *God hath his end.* God's end in all his crosse providences, is to bring the heart to submit and be content: and indeed this pleaseth God much; he loves to see his children satisfied with that portion he doth carve and allot them. It contents him to see us contented: therefore let us acquiesce in God's providence; now God hath his end.

2. *Satan misseth of his end.* The end why the devil (though by God's permission) did smite *Job* in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind; he did vex his body on purpose that he might disquiet his spirit. He hoped to bring *Job* into a fit of discontent; and then that he would in a passion break forth against God: but *Job* being so well contented with his condition, as that he fails to blessing of God, he did disappoint Satan of his hope, *the devil will cast some of you into prison*, Rev. ii. 10. Why doth the devil throw us into prison? It is not so much the hurting our body, as the molesting our mind, that he aims at: he would imprison our contentment, and disturb the regular motion of our souls; this is his design: it is not so much the putting us into a prison, as the putting us into a passion, that he attempts; but by holy contentation, Satan loseth his prey, he misseth of his end. The devil hath often deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by contentation in the midst of temptation; our contentment will discontent Satan. Oh, let us not gratify our enemy. Discontent is the devil's delight; now it is as he would have it, he loves to warm himself at the fire of our passions. Repentance is the joy of the angels, and discontent is the joy of the devils: as the devil danceth at discord, so he sings at discontent. The fire of our passions makes the devil a bon-fire; it is a kind of heaven to him to see us torturing ourselves with our own troubles: but by holy contentment, we frustrate

him of his purpose, and do as it were put him out of countenance.

§. *The fifth argument is, by contentment a christian gets a victory over himself: for a man to be able to rule his own spirit, this of all others is the most noble conquest.* Passion denotes weakness; to be discontented is suitable to flesh and blood: but to be in every state content; reproached, yet content; imprisoned, yet content; this is above nature; this is some of that holy valour and chivalry, which only a divine spirit is able to infuse. In the midst of the affronts of the world to be patient, and in the changes of the world to have the spirit calmed; this is a conquest worthy indeed of the garland of honour. Holy *Job*, divil'd and turned out of all, leaving his scarlet, and embracing the dunghill, (a sad catastrophe) yet he had learned contentment. It is said, *he fell upon the ground and worshipped*, *Job* i. 20. One would have thought he should have fallen upon the ground and blasphemed? No, he fell and worshipped. He adored God's justice and holiness: behold the strength of grace! here was an humble submission, yet a noble conquest; he got the victory over himself. It is no great matter for a man to yield to his own passions, this is facile and feminine; but to content himself in denying of himself, this is sacred.

§. 6. *The sixth great argument to work the heart to contentment, is the consideration that all God's providences, how crosse or bloody forever, shall do a believer good; and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. Not only *all good things*; but *all evil things* work for good; and shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? Suppose our troubles are twisted together, and sadly accented: what if sickness, poverty, reproach, law-suits, &c. do unite and muster their forces against us? All shall work for good; our maladies shall be our medicines: and shall we repine at that which shall undoubtedly do us good? *Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness*, Ps. cxii. 4. Affliction may be baptized *Marah*; it is bitter, but physical. Because this is so full of comfort, and may be a most excellent catholicon against discontent, I shall a little expatiate.

Qu. *It will be enquired how the evils of affliction work for good?* Ans. Several ways.

First, They are disciplinary; they teach us. The psalmist having very elegantly described



the church's trouble, *Pf. lxxiv.* prefixeth this title to the *psalm [Masehil.]* which signifies a *psalm giving instruction*; that which *seals up instruction*, works for good. God puts us sometimes under the black rod; but it is *virga disciplinaris*, a rod of discipline; *Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Mic. ix. 9. God makes our adversity our university. Affliction is a preacher; *Blow the trumpet in Tekoah*, Jer. vi. 1. The trumpet was to preach to the people, as appears, *ver. 6.* *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem.* Sometimes God speaks to the minister to lift up his voice like a trumpet, *Isa. lviii. 1.* and here he speaks to the trumpet to lift up its voice like a minister. Afflictions teach us, (1.) *Humility*: commonly prosperous, and proud. *Corrections* are God's *corrosives* to eat out the proud flesh. Jesus Christ is a *lilly of the valleys*, Cant. ii. 1. He dwells in an humble heart: God brings us into the valley of tears, that he may bring us into the valley of humility; *remembering my affliction, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me*, Lam. iii. 19. 20. When men are grown high, God hath no better way with them, than to brew them up a cup of wormwood. Afflictions are compared, to *thorns*, *Hos. ii. 8.* God's thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Suppose a man run at another with a sword to kill him; accidentally, it *only* lets out his imposthume; this doth him good. God's sword is to let out the imposthume of pride; and shall that which makes us humble, make us discontented? (2.) Afflictions teach us repentance; *thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised. I repented; and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, &c.* Jer. xxxi. 18. 19. Repentance is the precious fruit that grows upon the cross. When the fire is put under the still, the water drops from the roses: fiery afflictions make the waters of repentance drop and distill from the eyes; and is here any cause of discontent? (3.) Afflictions teach us to pray better, *they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them*, Isa. xxvi. 16. Before, they would say a prayer; now they poured out a prayer. *Jonah* was asleep in the ship, but awake and at prayer in the whale's belly. When God puts under the fire-brands of affliction, now our hearts boil over the more; God loves to have his children possessed with a spirit of prayer. Never did *David the sweet singer of Israel*, tune his harp more melodiously, ne-

ver did he pray better than when he was upon the waters. Thus afflictions do indisciplinate, and shall we be discontent at that which is for our good.

*Secondly*, afflictions are probatory, *Pf. lxvi. 10. 11.* Gold is not the worse for being tried, or corn for being fanned. Affliction is the touchstone of sincerity, it tries what metal we are made of; affliction is God's fan and his sieve. It is good that men be known; some serve God for a livery; they are like the fisherman that makes use of the net, only to catch the fish: so they go a-fishing with the net of religion, only to catch preferment; affliction discovers these. The *Donatists* went to the *Goths*, when the *Arians* prevailed; hypocrites will sail in a storm; true grace holds out in the winter-season. That is a precious faith, which, like the stars, shines brightest in the darkest night. It is good that our graces should be brought to trial; thus we have the comfort, and the gospel the honour; and why then discontented?

*Thirdly*, Afflictions they are expurgatory; these evils work for our good, because they work out sin; and shall I be discontented at this? What if I have more trouble, if I have less sin? The brightest day hath its clouds, the purest gold its dross, the most refined soul hath some lees of corruption. The saints lose nothing in the furnace but what they can well spare, their dross; is not this for our good? Why then should we murmur? *I am come to set fire on the earth*, Luke xii. 49. *Tertullian* understands it of the fire of affliction. God makes this like the fire of the three children, which burned only their bonds, and set them at liberty in the furnace: so the fire of affliction serves to burn the bonds, of iniquity. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged: and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin*, Isa. xxvii. 9. When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away his soul; when it comes to a godly man, it only takes away his sin: is there any cause why we should be discontented? God steep us in the brinish waters of affliction, that he may take out our spots. God's people are his husbandry, 1 *Cor. iii. 9.* the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods: God's ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of sin; his harrowing of us is to break the hard clods of impenitency, that the heart may be the fitter to receive

receive the seeds of grace; and if this be all, why should we be discontented?

*Fourthly*, Afflictions do both exercise and increase our grace. (1.) They exercise grace: affliction doth breathe our graces; every thing is most in its excellency, when it is most in its exercise. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be asleep, and hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers, or the sun when it is masked with a cloud? A sick man is living, but not lively; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to see grace in the eclipse. Now faith puts forth its purest and most noble acts in times of affliction: God makes the fall of the leaf the spring of our graces. What if we are more passive, if graces be more active. (2.) Afflictions do increase grace: as the wind serves to encrease and blow up the flame; so doth the windy blasts of affliction augment and blow up our graces: grace spends not in the furnace, but it is like the widow's oil in the cruse, which did encrease by pouring out. The torch, when it is beaten, burns brightest; so doth grace when it is exercised by sufferings. Sharp frosts nourish the good corn, so doth sharp afflictions grace. Some plants grow better in the shade than in the sun; as the bay and the cypress: the shade of adversity is better for some than the sun-shine of prosperity. Naturalists observe, that the colewort thrives better when it is watered with salt water than with fresh; so do some thrive better in the salt water of affliction, and shall we be discontented at that which makes us grow and fructify more?

*Fifthly*, these afflictions do bring more of God's immediate presence into the soul. When we are most assaulted, we shall be most assisted, *I will be with him in trouble*, Ps. xci. 15. It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is by his powerful presence in supporting, and his gracious presence in sweetening the present trial. God will be with us in trouble, not only to behold us, but to uphold us; as he was with *Daniel* in the lions den, and the three children in the fiery furnace. What if we have more trouble than others, if we have more of God with us than others have? We never have sweeter smiles from God's face, than when the world begins to look strange; *thy statutes have been my song*: where? Not when I was upon the throne, but *in the house of my pilgrimage*, Ps. cxix. 54. We read, *the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire*, 1 Kings xix. 11. But

in a metaphorical and spiritual sense: when the wind of affliction blows upon a believer, God is in the wind; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, *viz.* To sanctify, to support, to sweeten. If God be with us, the furnace shall be turned into a festival, the prison into a paradise, the earthquake into a joyful dance. Oh why should I be discontented; when I have more of God's company?

*Sixthly*, These evils of affliction are for good, as they bring with them certificates of God's love, and are evidences of his special favour. Affliction is the saint's livery; it is a badge and cognizance of honour; that the God of glory should look upon a worm, and take so much notice of him, as to afflict him rather than lose him, is an high act of favour. God's rod is a sceptre of dignity. *Job* calls God's afflicting of us, his magnifying of us, *Job* vii. 17. Some men's prosperity hath been their shame, when others affliction hath been their crown.

*Seventhly*, These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 16. That which works for my glory in heaven, works for my good: we do not read in scripture that any man's honour or riches do work for him a weight of glory, but afflictions do; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory; not that our sufferings do merit glory, (as the papists do wickedly gloss) but though they are not *causa*, they are *via*; they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it, and God makes us, as he did our captain, *perfect through sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. And shall not all this make us contented with our condition? Oh I beseech you, look not upon the evil of affliction, but the good. Afflictions in scripture are called *visitations*, *Job* vii. 18. The word in the *Hebrew* to *visit*, is taken in a good sense as well as a bad: God's afflictions are but friendly visits; behold here God's rod, like *Aaron's rod*, blossoming, and *Jonathan's rod*, it hath honey at the end of it. Poverty shall starve out our sins; the sickness of the body cures a sin-sick soul: O then, instead of murmuring and being discontented, *bless the Lord*; hadst thou not met with such a rub in the way, thou mightest have gone to hell, and never stopped.

§ 7. *The seventh argument to contentation.*

The next argument to contentment is, consider the evil of discontent. Malecontent hath a mixture



a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man? Sometimes he will sit upon his bed, by and by he will ly down, and when he is down he is not quiet; first he turns on one side, and then on the other, he is restless: this is just the emblem of a discontented spirit, the man is not sick, yet he is never well; sometimes he likes such a condition of life, and when he hath it, yet he is not pleased, he is soon weary; and then another condition of life; this is an evil under the sun.

Now the evil of *discontent* appears in three things.

*Evil 1. The fardiness of it is unworthy of a christian.*

1. It is unworthy of his profession. It was the saying of an heathen, bear thy condition quietly, *noſce te eſſe hominem*, know thou art a man: ſo I ſay, *bear thy condition contentedly*, noſce te eſſe chriſtianum, *know thou art a chriſtian*. Thou profeſſeſt to live by faith; what, and not *content*? Faith is a grace that doth ſubſtantiate things not ſeen, *Heb. xi. 1.* Faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promiſes; faith lives not by bread alone, when the water is ſpent in the bottle, faith knows whither to have recourſe; now to ſee a chriſtian dejected in the want of viſible ſupplies and recruits, where is faith? Oh, faith one, my eſtate in the world is down. Ay, and which is worſe, thy faith is down. *Wilt thou not be contented, unleſs God let down the veſſel to thee, as he did to Peter, wherein were all manner of beaſts of the earth, and fowls of the air? Acts x. 12. Muſt you have the firſt and ſecond courſe?* This is like *Thomas, unleſs I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe. John xx. 25.* So, unleſs thou haſt a ſenſible feeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content. True faith will truſt God where it cannot trace him, and will adventure upon God's bond, tho' it hath nothing in view. *You who are discontented, becauſe you have not all you would, let me tell you, either your faith is a nonentity, or at beſt but an embryo; it is a weak faith that muſt have ſtilts and crutches to ſupport it. Nay, diſcontent is not only below faith, but below reaſon; why are you diſcontented? Is it becauſe you are diſpoſſeſſed of ſuch comforts? Well, and have you not reaſon to guide you? Doth not reaſon tell you, that you are but tenants at will? And may not God turn you out*

*when he pleaſe!* You hold not your eſtate *jure*, but *gratis*; not by juridical right, but upon favour and courteſy.

2. It is unworthy of the relation we ſtand in to God; a chriſtian is inveſted with the title and privilege of *ſonſhip*, *Eph. i. 5.* He is an heir of the promiſe: Oh conſider the let of free-grace is fallen upon thee, thou art nearly allied to Chriſt, and of the blood-royal; thou art advanced in ſome ſenſe, above the angels; *why then art thou, being the king's ſon, lean from day to day?* 2 Sam. xlii. 4. Why art thou diſcontented? Oh, how unworthy is this! As if the heir to ſome great monarch ſhould go pinning up and down, becauſe he may not pick ſuch a flower.

*Evil 2. Conſider the ſinfulneſs of it; which appears in three things, (1.) The cauſes, (2.) The concomitants, (3.) The conſequences of it.*

1. It is ſinful in the cauſes; which are theſe.

1. *Pride*. He that thinks highly of his deſerts, uſually eſteems meanly of his condition: a diſcontented man is a proud man, he thinks himſelf better than others; therefore finds fault with the wiſdom of God, that he is not above others. Thus the thing *formed*, ſaith to him that *formed* it, *why haſt thou made me thus?* Rom. ix. 20. Why am I not higher? Diſcontents are nothing elſe but the aſſuations and boilings over of pride.

2. The ſecond cauſe of diſcontent is, *envy*, which *Auguſtine* calls the ſin of the devil; Satan envied *Adam* the glory of *paradiſe*, and the robe of innocency: he that envies what his neighbour hath, is never contented with that portion which God's providence doth parcel out to him; as envy ſtirrs up *ſtriſe*, (this made the *Plebian* faction ſo ſtrong among the *Romans*) ſo it creates diſcontent: the envious man looks ſo much upon the bleſſings which another enjoys, that he cannot ſee his own mercies, and ſo doth continually vex and torture himſelf. *Cain* envied that his brother's ſacrifice was accepted, and his rejected; here upon he was diſcontented, and preſently murderous thoughts began to ariſe in his heart.

3. Third cauſe is, *covetouſneſs*. This is a radical ſin. Whence are vexing law-ſuits, but from diſcontent? And whence is diſcontent, but from covetouſneſs? *Covetouſneſs* and *contentedneſs* cannot dwell in the ſame heart. *Avarice* is an *heluo*, that is never ſatiſfied. The covetous man is like *Behemoth*, behold he drinketh

up a river, he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth, Job xl. 33. There are four things (saith Solomon) say, it is not enough. I may add a fifth, the heart of a covetous man, he is still craving. Covetousness is like a wolf in the breast, which is ever feeding; and because a man is not satisfied, he is never content.

4. The fourth cause of discontent is, *jealousy*, which is sometimes occasioned through melancholy, and sometimes misapprehension. The spirit of jealousy causeth this evil spirit. Jealousy is the rage of a man, Prov. vi. 34. And oft, this is nothing but suspicion and fancy: yet such as creates real discontent.

5. The fifth cause of discontent is *distrust*, which is a great degree of *Atheism*. The discontented person is ever distrustful. The bill of provision grows low: I am in these straits and exigencies, can God help me? Can he prepare a table in the wilderness? Sure he cannot. My estate is exhausted, can God recruit me? My friends are gone, can God raise me up more? Sure the arm of his power is shrunk. I am like the dry fleece, can any water come upon this fleece? If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? 1 Kings vii. 2. Thus the anchor of hope, and the shield of faith, being cast away, the soul goes pining up and down.

Discontent is nothing else but the *eccho* of unbelief: and remember, *distrust* is worse than *distress*.

II. Discontent is evil in the *concomitants* of it, which are two.

1. Discontent is joyned with a *sullen melancholy*. A christian of a right temper should be ever cheerful in God; serve the Lord with gladness, Ps. c. 2. A sign the oil of grace hath been poured into the heart, when the oil of gladness shines in the countenance. Cheerfulness credits religion; how can the discontented person be cheerful? Discontent is a dogged, sullen humour; because we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good word or look from us; as the bird in the cage, because she is pent up, and cannot fly in the open air, therefore beats herself against the cage, and is ready to kill herself. Thus that peevish prophet; I do well to be angry to the death, Jon. iv.

2. Discontent is accompanied with *unthankfulness*; because we have not all we desire, we never mind the mercies which we have: we deal with God as the widow of Sarepta did with the prophet; the prophet *Elijah* had been a means

to keep her alive in the famine; for it was for her sake, that her meal in the barre and her oil in the cruse failed not? But as soon as ever her son dies, she falls into a passion, and begins to quarrel with the prophet; what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and slay my son? 1 Kings i. 18. So ungratefully do we deal with God: we can be content to receive mercies from God; but if he doth cross us in the least thing, then through discontent, we grow touchy and impatient, and are ready to fly upon God; thus God loseth all his mercies. We read in scripture of the *thank-offering*, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. The discontented person cuts God short of this; the Lord loseth his *thank-offering*. A discontented christian repines in the midst of mercies, as Adam who sinned in the midst of paradise. Discontent is a spider that sucks the poison of unthankfulness out of the sweetest flower of God's blessings; and a devilish chymistry extracts dross out of the most refined gold. The discontented person thinks every thing he doth for God too much, and every thing God doth for him too little. O what a sin is unthankfulness! it is an accumulative sin. What Cicero saith of *parricide*, I may say of *ingratitude*; there are many sins bound up in this one sin; it is a voluminous wickedness; and how full of this sin is discontent? A discontented christian, because he hath not all the world, therefore dishonours God with the mercies which he hath. God made Eve out of Adam's rib, to be an helper (as Chrysostom saith) but the devil hath made an arrow of this rib, and shot Adam to the heart: so doth discontent take the rib of God's mercy, and ungratefully shoot at him; estate, liberty shall be employed against God. Thus it is often-times. Behold then how discontent and ingratitude are interwoven and twisted one within another: thus discontent is sinful in its concomitants.

III. It is sinful in its *consequences*, which are these;

(1.) It makes a man very unlike the spirit of God. The spirit of God is a meek spirit. The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove, Matth. iii. 6. A dove is the emblem of meekness; a discontented spirit is not a meek spirit.

(2.) It makes a man like the devil: the devil, being swelled with the poison of envy and malice, is never content. Just so is the male-content



tent. The devil is an unquiet spirit, he is still walking about, 1 *Pet.* v. 8. It is his rest to be walking. And herein is the discontented person like him; for he goes up and down vexing himself, *seeking rest, and finding none*; he is the devil's picture.

(3.) Discontent disjoins the soul, it untunes the heart for duty; *is any man afflicted, let him pray*, Jam. v. 13. But, is any man discontented? How shall we pray? *Lift up pure hands without wrath*, 1 *Tim.* v. 8. Discontent if full of wrath and passion: the male-content cannot lift up pure hands; he lifts up leprous hands, he poisons his prayers; will God accept of a poisoned sacrifice? *Chrysostom* compares prayer to a fine garland; those, saith he, that make a garland, their hands had need to be clean: prayer is a precious garland, the heart that makes it had need be clean. Discontent throws poison into the spring (which was death among the *Romans*) discontent puts the heart into a disorder and mutiny, and such an one cannot serve the Lord *without distraction*.

(4.) Discontent sometimes unfits for the very use of reason; *Jonah*, in a passion of discontent, spake no better than blasphemy, and none-sense; *I do well*, saith he, *to be angry unto the death*, Jon. iv. 8. What? To be angry with God? And to die for anger? Sure he did not know well what he said. When discontent transports, then, like *Moses* we speak *unadvisedly with our lips*. This humour doth even suspend the very acts of reason.

(5.) Discontent doth not only disquiet a man's self, but those who are near him. This evil spirit troubles families, parishes, &c. If there be but one string out of tune, it spoils all the music. One discontented spirit makes jarrings and discords among others. It is this ill humour that breeds quarrels and law-suits. Whence is all our contentions, but for want of contentation? From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts? James iv. 1. In particular from the lust of discontent? Why did *Abraham* raise a war against his father, and would have taken off not only his crown, but his head? Was it not his discontent? *Abraham* would be king. Why did *Ahab* stone *Naboth*? Was it not discontent about the vineyard? Oh this devil of discontent! Thus you have seen the sinfulness of it.

Evil 3. Consider the simplicity of it: I may say as the *Psalmist*, surely they are disquieted in vain: Ps. xxxix. 6. Which appears thus,

1. Is it not a vain simple thing to be troubled at the loss of that which is in its own nature perishing and changeable? God hath put a vicissitude into the creature; all the world rings changes; and for me to meet with inconstancy here, to lose a friend, estate, to be in a constant fluctuation, is no more than to see a flower wither, or a leaf drop off in autumn, there is an autumn upon every comfort, a fall of the leaf; now it is extream folly to be discontented at the loss of those things which are in their own nature lofable. What *Solomon* saith of riches, is true of all things under the sun, *they take wings*. *Noah's* dove brought an olive-branch in its mouth; but presently flew out of the ark, and never returned more: such a comfort brings to us honey in its mouth, but it hath wings; and to what purpose should we be troubled, unless we had wings to fly after and overtake it?

2. Discontent is an heart-breaking; *by sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken*, Prov. xv. 13. It takes away the comfort of life. There is none of us but have many mercies if we can see them; now because we have not all we desire, therefore we will lose the comfort of that which we have already. *Jonah* having his gourd smitten (a withering vanity) was so discontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the whale's belly; he takes no comfort of his life but wisheth that he might die. What folly is this? We must have all or none; herein we are like children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, because they may have no bigger. Discontent eats out the comfort of life. Besides, it were well if it were seriously weighed how prejudicial this is, even to our health: for discontent, as it doth disquiet the mind, so it doth pine the body! it frets as a moth, and by wasting the spirits, weakens the vitals. The plurisie of discontent brings the body into a consumption; and is not this folly?

3. Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but it makes the cross heavier. A contented spirit goes cheerfully under its affliction. Discontent makes our grief as unsupportable, as it is unreasonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain; but if the leg be sore, then the fetters trouble. Discontent of mind is the sore that makes the fetters of affliction more grievous. Discontent troubles us more than the trouble itself, it sleeps the affliction in wormwood. When Christ was upon

upon the cross, the *Jews* brought him gall and vinegar to drink, that it might add to his sorrow. Discontent brings to a man affliction gall and vinegar to drink; this is worse than the affliction it self. Is it not folly for a man to imbitter his own cross?

4. Discontent spins out our troubles the longer. A christian is discontent because he is in want; and therefore he is in want, because he is discontented: he murmurs because he is afflicted; and therefore he is afflicted, because he murmurs. Discontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deals herein with us, as we use to do with our children: when they are quiet and cheerful, they shall have any thing; but if we see them cry and fret, then we withhold from them: we get nothing from God by our discontent but blows, the more the child struggles, the more it is beaten: when we struggle with God by our sinful passions, he doubles and trebles his strokes; God will tame our curst hearts. What got *Israel* by their peevishness? They were within eleven days journey of *Canaan*, and now they were discontented, and began to murmur; God leads them a march of forty years long in the wilderness. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have seen the evil of discontent. I have been long upon this argument; but *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis dicitur*.

§. 8. *The eighth argument to contentation*

The next argument or motive to contentment is this, why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? Perhaps if he had more, he would be less content; covetousness is a dry drunkenness. The world is such, that the more we have, the more we crave: it cannot fill the heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? Not by pouring oil on the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdrawing the fuel. When the appetite is enflamed after riches, how may a man be satisfied? Not by having just what he desires, but by withdrawing the fuel, &c. Moderating and lessening his desires. He that is contented hath enough. A man in a fever or dropsie thirsts; how do you satisfy him? Not by giving him liquid things, which will enflame his thirst the more; but by removing the cause, and so, curing the distemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his heart lower.

§. 9. *The ninth argument to contentation.*

The next argument to contentment is the

*shortness of life*. It is but a vapour, saith *James*, Jam. iv. 14. Life is a wheel ever running. The poets painted time with wings to shew the volubility and swiftness of it. *Job* compares it to a *swift post*, Job ix. 25. (Our life rides post) and to a day, not a year. It is indeed like a day. Infancy is as it were the day-break, youth is the sun-rising, full-growth is the sun in the meridian, old-age is sun setting, sickness is the evening, then comes the night of death. How quickly is this day of life spent? Oftentimes this sun goes down at noon-day; life ends before the evening of old age comes; nay, sometimes the sun of life sets presently after sun rising. Quickly after the dawning of infancy, the night of death approaches. Oh, how short is the life of man! The consideration of the brevity of life may work the heart to contentment. Remember thou art to be here but a day; thou hast but a short way to go, and what needs a long provision for a short way? If a traveller hath but enough to bring him to his journey's end, he desires no more. We have but a day to live, and perhaps we may be in the twelfth hour of the day; why if God give us but enough to bear our charges till night, it is sufficient, let us be content. If a man had the lease of an house, or farm, but for two or three days, and he should fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiscreet? So, when we have but a short time here, and death calls us presently off the stage, to thirst immoderately after the world, and pull down our souls to build up an estate, it is an extreme folly. Therefore, as *Esau* said once, in a prophane sense concerning his birth-right, lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birth-right do me? So let a christian say in a religious sense, lo, I am even at the point of death, my grave is going to be made, and what good will the world do me? If I have but enough till sun-setting, I am content.

§. 10. *The tenth argument to contentation.*

The tenth argument or motive to contentment is, consider seriously the nature of a prosperous condition. There are in a prosperous estate three things.

1. *Plus molestiæ*, more trouble. Many who have abundance of all things to enjoy, yet have not so much content and sweetness in their lives, as some that go to their hard labour. Sad, solicitous thoughts do often attend a prosperous condition. Care is the *malus genius*, or evil spirit which haunts the rich man, and will not



suffer him to be quiet. When his chest is full of gold, his heart is full of care, either how to manage, or how to encrease, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Oh the troubles and perplexities that do attend prosperity! The world's high seats are very uneasy; sun-shine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorcheth with its heat; the bee gives honey, but sometimes it stings: prosperity hath its sweetness, and also its sting, *competency with contentment is far more eligible*. Never did Jacob sleep better than when he had the heavens for his canopy, and an hard stone for his pillow. A large voluminous estate, is but like a long trailing garment, which is more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous condition there is *plus periculi*, more danger, and that two ways.

First, *ex parte ipsius*, in respect of a man's self, the rich man's table is oft his snare; he is ready to ingulph himself too deep in these sweet waters. In this sense it is hard to know how to abound. It must be a strong brain that bears heady-wine; he had need have much wisdom and grace, that knows how to bear an high condition; either he is ready to kill himself with care, or surfeit himself with luscious delights. Oh the hazard of honour, the damage of dignity! Pride, security, rebellion, are the three worms that breed of plenty, *Deut. xxxii. 15*. The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. How soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease? Prosperity is often a trumpet that sounds a retreat, it calls men off from the pursuit of religion. The sun of prosperity oft dulleth, and puts out the fire of zeal, how many souls hath the pluriſie of abundance killed? They that *will be rich, fall into snares*, 1 Tim. vi. 10. The world is bird-lime at our feet, it is full of *golden sands*, but they are *quick-sands*. Prosperity, like smooth Jacob, will supplant and betray; a great estate, without much vigilancy, will be a thief to rob us of heaven; such as are upon the pinnacle of honour, are in most danger of falling.

A lower estate is less hazardous, the little pinnacle rides safe by the shore, when the gallant ship advancing with its mast and top-sail, is cast away. *Homo victus in paradiso, victor in stercore*. Adam in paradise was overcome, when Job on the dung-hill was a conqueror. *Samson fell asleep on Delilah's lap*: some have fallen so fast asleep on the lap of ease and plenty, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell. The world's fawning is worse than its

frowning; and it is more to be feared when it smiles, than when it thunders. Prosperity, in scripture, is compared to a candle, *Job xxix. 3*. *When his candle shined upon my head*. How many have burnt their wings about this candle! *Segetem ubertas nimia sternit, rami onere franguntur, ad maturitatem non pervenit nimia fecunditas*: the corn being over-reap, sheds, and fruit, when it mellows, begins to rot; when men do mellow with the sin of prosperity, commonly their souls begin to rot in sin. *How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven?* Luke xviii. 24. His golden weights keep him from ascending up the hill of God; and shall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower orb? What if we are not in so much bravery and gallantry as others? We are not in so much danger; as we want the honour of the world, so the temptations. Oh the abundance of danger that is in abundance! We see, by common experience, that lunaticks, when the moon is declining, and in the wane, are sober enough; but when it is in the full, they are more wild and exorbitant: when men's estates are in the wane, they are more serious about their souls, more humble; but when it is the full of the moon, and they have abundance, then their hearts begin to swell with their estates, and are scarce themselves. Those that write concerning the several climates, observe, that such as live in the northern parts of the world, if you bring them into the south part, they lose their stomachs, and die quickly; but those that live in the more southern and hot climates, bring them into the north, and their stomachs mend, and they are long-lived: give me leave to apply it; bring a man from the cold, starving climate of poverty, into the hot southern climate of prosperity, and he begins to lose his appetite to good things, he grows weak, and a thousand to one, if all his religion doth not die; but bring a christian from the south to the north, from a rich flourishing estate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry air, and then his stomach mends, he hath a better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Christ, he thirsts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life, than at six before; this man is now like to live and hold out in his religion: be content then with a modicum; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to heaven, it sufficeth.

2. A prosperous condition is dangerous in regard

gard of others; a great estate, for the most part draws envy to it, *Gen. xxvi. 12, 13, 14.* Whereas in little there is quiet. *David a shepherd* was quiet; but *David a courtier* was pursued by his enemies: envy cannot endure a superior; an envious man knows not how to live but upon the ruins of his neighbours; he raiseth himself higher by bringing others lower. Prosperity is an eye-sore to many. Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleec'd. The barren tree grows peaceably: no man meddles with the ash or willow; but the apple-tree and the damaskin shall have many rude suitors. Oh then be contented to carry a lesser sail; he that hath less revenues hath less envy; such as bear the fairest frontispiece, and make the greatest shew in the world, are the white for envy and malice to shoot at.

3. A prosperous condition hath in it a greater reckoning; every man must be responsible for his talents. Thou that hast great possessions in the world, dost thou trade thy estate for God's glory? Art thou rich in good works? Grace makes a *private person a common good*. Dost thou disburse thy money for public uses? It is lawful, in this sense, to put out our money to use. Oh let us all remember an estate is a depositum; we are but stewards, and our Lord and Master will e're long say, *give an account of your stewardship*: the greater our estate, the greater our charge, the more our revenues, the more our reckonings. You that have a lesser mill going in the world, be content; God will expect less from you, where he hath sowed more sparingly.

§. 11. *The eleventh argument to contentation.*

The eleventh argument is the example of those who have been eminent for contentation. Examples are usually more forcible than precepts. *Abraham*, being called out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bid him offer up his son *Isaac*, *Gen. xxii. 2.* This was great work: *Isaac* was *filius senectutis*, the son of his old age; *filius dilectionis*, the son of his love; *filius promissi*, the son of the promise; Christ the Messiah was to come of his line. *In Isaac shall thy seed be blessed*: so that to offer up *Isaac* seemed not only to oppose *Abraham's* reason, but his faith too; for, if *Isaac* die, the world (for ought he knew) must be without a mediator. Besides, if *Isaac* be sacrificed, was there no other hand to do it but *Abraham*? Must

the father needs be the executioner? Must he that was the instrument of giving *Isaac* his being, be the instrument of taking it away? Yet *Abraham* doth not dispute or hesitate, but believes *against hope*, and is content with God's prescription: so, when God called him to leave his country, *Heb. xi. 8.* He was content. Some would have argued thus; What? Leave my friends, my native soil, my brave situation, and go turn pilgrim? *Abraham* is content: besides, *Abraham* went blind-fold, *he knew not whither he went*, ver. 8. God held him in suspense, he must go wander he knows not where; and when he doth come to the place God hath laid out for him, he knows not what oppositions he shall meet with there; the world doth seldom cast a favourable aspect upon strangers, *Gen. xxxi. 15.* Yet he is content, and obeys, *he sojourned in the land of promise*, *Heb. xi. 9.* Behold a little his pilgrimage. First he goes to *Charran*, a city in *Mesopotamia*: when he had sojourned there a while, his father dies; then he removed to *Sichem*, then to *Bethlem* in *Canaan*; there a famine ariseth; then he went down to *Egypt*; after that he returns into *Canaan*; when he comes there (it is true he had a promise) but he found nothing to answer expectation; he had not there one foot of land, but was an exile: in this time of his sojourning he buried his wife; and as for his dwellings, he had no sumptuous buildings, but led his life in poor cottages: all this was enough to have broken any man's heart. *Abraham* might think thus with himself, is this the land I must possess? here is no probability of any good; *all things are against me*: well is he discontented? No; God faith to him, *Abraham*, go, leave thy country; and this word was enough to lead him all the world over; he is presently upon his march; here was a man had learned to be content. But let us descend a little lower, to heathen *Zeno* (of whom *Seneca* speaks) who had once been very rich, hearing of a shipwreck, and that all his goods were drowned at sea; fortune, saith he, (he spake in an heathen dialect) *hath dealt with me, and would have me now study philosophy*; he was content to change his course of life, to leave off being a merchant, and turn a philosopher. And if an heathen said thus, shall not a christian much more say, when the world is drained from him, *Jubet Deus mundum derelinquere, & Christum expeditus sequi*; God would have me leave off following the world, and study Christ more,



and how to get to heaven? Do I see an heathen contented, and a christian disquieted? How did heathens vilify those things which christians did magnify? Though they knew not God, or what true happiness meant; yet, would speak very sublimely of a numen or deity, and of the life to come, as *Aristotle* and *Plato*; and for those *elysian* delights, which they did but fancy, they undervalued and condemned the things here below: it was the doctrine they taught their scholars, and which some of them practised, that *they should strive to be contented with a little*; they were willing to make an exchange; to have less gold, and more learning; and, shall not we be content then to have less of the world, so we may have more of Christ? May not christians blush to see the heathens content with a *viaticum*, so much as would recruit nature; and to see themselves so transported with the love of earthly things, that if they begin a little to abate, and the *bill of provision* grows short, they murmur, and are like *Micah*, *have ye taken away my gods, and do you ask me what I ail?* Judg. xviii. 24. Have heathens gone so far in contentation? And is it not sad for us to come short of heaven? These *Heroes* of their time, how did they embrace death itself? *Socrates* died in prison, *Hercules* was burnt alive, *Cato* (whom *Seneca* calls *the lively image and Portraiture of virtue*) thrust through with a sword: but how bravely, and with contentment of spirit did they die? *Shall I* (saith *Seneca*) *weep for Cato, or Regulus, or the rest of those worthies, that died with so much valour and patience?* Did not cross providence make them to alter their countenance? And do I see a christian appalled and amazed? Did not death fright them? And doth it distract us? Did the spring-head of nature rise so high? And shall not grace, like the *waters of the sanctuary*, rise higher? We that pretend to live by faith, may we not go to school to them, who had no other pilot but reason to guide them? Nay, let me come a step lower, to creatures void of reason; we see every creature is *contented* with its allowance; the beasts with their provender, the birds with their nests, they live only upon providence; and shall we make ourselves below them? Let a christian go to school to the ox and the ass, to learn contentedness; we think we never have enough, and are still laying up: the fowls of the air do not lay up, *they reap not, nor gather into barns*, Matth. vi. 26. It is an

argument which Christ brings to make christians contented with their condition: the birds do not lay up, yet they are provided for, and are contented; are ye not (saith Christ) much better than they? But if you are discontented, are you not much worse than they? Let these examples quicken us.

§ 12. *The twelfth argument to contentation.*

The twelfth argument to contentment, is, whatever change of trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the hell he shall have. Whatever eclipse may be upon his name, or estate, I may say of it, as *Athanasius* of his banishment, *it is a little cloud that will soon be blown over*; and then his gulph is shot, his hell is past. Death begins a wicked man's hell, but it puts an end to a godly man's hell. Think with thy self, what if I endure this? It is but a temporary hell; indeed if all our hell be here, it is but an easy hell. What is the cup of affliction to the cup of damnation? *Lazarus* could not get a crumb; he was so diseased, that the dogs took pity on him, and, (as if they had been his physician) *licked his sores*: but this was an easy hell, the angels quickly fetched him out of it. If all our hell be in this life, in the midst of this hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more hell, but paradise. If our hell be here, we may see to the bottom of it; it is but skin-deep, it cannot touch the soul, and we may see to the end of it; it is an hell that is short-lived; after a wet night of affliction, comes a bright morning of the resurrection; if our lives are short, our trials cannot be long: as our riches take wings and flee, so do our sufferings; then let us be contented.

§ 13. *The thirteenth argument to contentation.*

The last argument to contentment, is this, to have a competency, and to want contentment, is a great judgment. For a man to have an huge stomach, that whatever meat you give him, he is still craving, and never satisfied; you use to say, this is a great judgment upon the man: thou who art a devourer of money, and yet never hast enough, but still criest, *give, give*, this is a sad judgment; *they shall eat, and not have enough*, Hos. iv. 10. The throat of a malicious man is an *open sepulchre*, Rom. iii. 13. So is the heart of a covetous man. Covetousness is not only *malum cu'pæ*, but *malum pænæ*; it is not only a sin, but the punishment of a sin. It is a secret curse upon a covetous person, he shall thirst, and thirst, and never be satisfied;

satisfied; *he that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver*, Eccl. v. 10. And is not this a curse? What was it but a severe judgment upon the people of Judah? *Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink*, Hag. i. 6. Oh let us take heed of this plague. Did *Esau* say to his brother, I have abundance, my brother, Gen. xxxvii. 9. Or, as we translate it, *I have enough*? And shall not a christian say so much more? It is sad that our hearts should be dead to heavenly things and a sponge to suck in earthly. Yet all that hath been said, will not work our minds to heavenly contentation.

CHAP. XII. *Three things inserted by way of caution.*

In the next place, I come to lay down some necessary cautions: though (I say) a man should be content in every estate, yet there are three estates in which he must not be contented.

*Caution 1.* He must not be contented in a natural estate; here he must learn not to be content. A sinner in his pure naturals is under the wrath of God, *John* iii. 16. and shall he be content, when that dreadful vial is going to be poured out? Is it nothing to be under the scorings of divine fury? *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings*? A sinner as a sinner, is *under the power of Satan*, Acts xxvi. 18. and shall he in this estate be contented? Who would be contented to stay in the enemy's quarters? While we sleep in the lap of sin, the devil doth to us as the *Philistines* did to *Samson*, cut the lock of our strength, and put out our eyes; be not content, O sinner, in this estate. For a man to be in debt, body and soul, in fear every hour to be arrested and carried prisoner to hell, shall he now be content? Here I preach against contentation. Oh get out of this condition: I would hasten you out of it, as the angel hastened *Lot* out of *Sodom*, Gen. xix. 15. There is the smell of the fire and brimstone upon you. The longer a man stays in his sin, the more sin doth strengthen; 'tis hard to get out of sin, when the heart as a garrison is victualled and fortified. A young plant is easily removed; but when the tree is once rooted, there is no stirring of it: thou who art rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will cost thee many a sad pull ere thou art plucked out of thy natural estate, *Jer.* vi. 16. 'Tis an hard thing to have a brazen face and a broken heart; *he travaileth with iniquity*, Ps. vii. 14. Be assured, the longer you travail with

your sins, the more and the sharper pangs you must expect in the new birth. O be not contented with your natural estate. *David* saith, why art thou disquieted, O my soul? Ps. xliii. 5. But a sinner should say to himself, why art thou not disquieted, O my soul? Why is it that thou layest afflictions so to heart, and canst not lay sin to heart? It is a mercy when we are disquieted about sin. A man had better be at the trouble of setting a bone, than to be lame, and in pain all his life; blessed is that trouble that brings the soul to Christ. It is one of the worst lights to see a bad conscience quiet; of the two, better is a fever than a lethargy. I wonder to see a man in his natural estate content; what, content to go to hell?

*Caution 2.* Though, in regard of externals, a man should be in every state content, yet he must not be content in such a condition, wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a man's trade be such, that he can hardly use it, but he must trespass upon a command (and so *make a trade of sin*) he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case, had better knock off and divert; better lose some of his gain, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So, for servants that live in a profane family (the suburbs of hell) where the name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain; they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come out of the tents of these sinners; there is a double danger in living among the profane.

1. Left we come to be infected with the poison of their ill example. *Joseph*, living in *Pharaoh's* court, had learned to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*, Gen. xlii. 15. We are prone to suck in example; men take in deeper impressions by the eye than by the ear. *Dives* was a bad pattern, and he had many brethren that seeing him sin, trode just in his steps; therefore, saith he, *I pray thee send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren: that he may testify to them, that they come not into this place of torment*, Luke xvi. 27. 28. *Dives* knew which way they went; it is easie to catch a disease from another, but not to catch health: The bad will sooner corrupt the good than the good will convert the bad. Take an equal quantity and proportion, so much sweet wine with so much sowre vinegar; the vinegar will sooner sowre the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar. Sin is compared to the plague,



plague, 1 *Kings* viii. 39. And to leaven, 1 *Cor.* v. 7. To shew of what a spreading nature it is. A bad master makes a bad servant. *Jacob's* cattle, by looking on the rods which were speckled and ring-straked, conceived like the rods. We do as we see others do before us, especially those that are above us. If the head be sick, the other parts of the body are distempered. If the sun shine not upon the mountains, it must needs set in the valleys. We pray, *lead us not into temptations*: Lot was the world's miracle, who kept himself fresh in *Sodom's* salt water.

2. By living in an evil family, we are liable to incur their punishment; *pour out thy wrath upon the families that call not upon thy name*, *Jer.* xiii. 25. For want of pouring out of prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be poured out. It is dangerous living in the tents of *Kedar*. When God sends his flying roll, written within and without with curses, it enters into the house of the thief and the perjurer, and consumes the timber and the stones thereof, *Zech.* v. 4. Is it not of sad consequence to live in a profane perjured family, when the sin of the governor pulls his house about his ears? If the stone and timber be destroyed, how shall the servant escape? And suppose God send not a temporal roll of curses in the family, there is a spiritual roll, and that is worse, *Prov.* iii. 33. Be not content to live where religion dies. *Salute the brethren, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house*, *Col.* iv. 15. The house of the godly is a little church, the house of the wicked a little hell, *Prov.* vii. 27. Oh, incorporate yourselves into a religious family; the house of a good man is perfumed with a blessing, *Prov.* iii. 33. When the holy oil of grace is poured on the head, the favour of this ointment sweetly diffuseth itself, and the virtue of it runs down upon the skirts of the family. Pious examples are very magnetical and forcible. *Seneca* said to his sister, though I leave you not wealth, yet I will leave you a good example. Let us ingraft ourselves among the saints; by being often among the spices, we come to smell of them.

*Caution* 3. The third caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content ourselves with a little grace. Grace is the best blessing. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of *Christ's* ascension to heaven, *to give gifts*;

and the end of those gifts *that we may grow up into him who is the head, Christ*, *Eph.* iv. 19. Where the apostle distinguisheth between our being in *Christ*, and our growing in him; our ingrafting and our flourishing: be not content with a modicum in religion.

It is not enough that there be life, but there must be fruit. Barrenness in the law was accounted a curse. The farther we are from fruit, the nearer we are to cursing, *Heb.* vi. 8. It is a sad thing when men are fruitful only in the unfruitful works of darkness. Be not content with a drachm or two of grace; next to a still-born, a stravelling in *Christ* is worst. Oh covet more grace, never think thou hast enough; we are bid to covet the best things, 1 *Cor.* 12. It is an heavenly ambition, when we desire to be high in God's favour; a blessed contention, when all the strife is, who shall be most holy. *Saint Paul*, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not a little grace; he reached forward, and pressed towards the mark of the high calling of God in *Christ Jesus*, *Phil.* iii. 13, 14. A true christian is a wonder, he is the most contented, and yet the least satisfied: he is contented with a morsel of bread, and a little water in the cruise, yet never satisfied with grace; he doth pant and breathe after more: this is his prayer, Lord more conformity to *Christ*, more communion with *Christ*; he would fain have *Christ's* image more lively pictured upon his soul. True grace is always progressive: as the saints are called lamps and stars: in regard of their light; so trees of righteousness (*Isa.* lxi. 3. for their growth; they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth several sorts of fruit.

A true christian grows, 1. *In beauty*. Grace is the best complexion of the soul; it is at the first plantation, like *Rachel*, fair to look upon; but still the more it lives, the more it sends forth its rays of beauty. *Abraham's* faith was at first beautiful; but at last it did shine in its orient colours, and grew so illustrious, that God himself was in love with it, and makes his faith a pattern to all believers.

2. A true Christian grows in *sweetness*. A poisonous weed may grow as much as the hyssop, or rose-mary, the poppy in the field, as the corn; the crab as the pearmain; but the one hath a harsh sowre taste, the other mellows as it grows; an hypocrite may grow in outward dimensions, as much as a child of God; he may pray as much, profess as much; but he grows only

only in magnitude, he brings forth only sowre grapes, his duties are leavened with pride : the other ripens as he grows ; he grows in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweeten his duties, and make them come off with a better relish. The believer grows as the flower, he casts a fragrantcy and perfume.

3. A true christian grows in *strength* ; he grows still more *rooted* and *settled*. The more the tree grows, the more it spreads its root in the earth : a christian, who is a plant of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Christ, and sucks spiritoal juice and sap from him ; he is a dwarf in regard of humility, but a giant in regard of strength. He is strong to do duties, to bear burdens, resist tentations.

4. He grows in the *exercise of his grace* ; he hath not only oil in his lamps, but his lamps are burning and shining. Grace is agile and dexterous. Christ's vines do flourish, *Cant.* vi.

11. hence we read of a *lively hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. and a  *fervent love*, 1 Pet. i. 21. here is the activity of grace. Indeed sometimes grace is a sleepy habit of the soul, like sap in the vine, not exerting its vigour, which may be occasioned through spiritual sloth, or by reason of falling into some sin : but this is only for a while ; the spring of grace will come, *the flowers will appear*, and *the fig-tree put forth her green figs*. The fresh gales of the spirit do sweetly revive and refocilate grace. The church of Christ, whose heart was a *garden*, and her graces as precious spices, prays for the heavenly breathings of the spirit, that her sacred spices might flow out, *Cant.* vi. 16.

1. A true christian grows *incremento*, both in the kind and in the degree of grace. To his spiritual living he gets an augmentation : he adds to *faith*, *virtue* : to *virtue knowledge*, to *knowledge temperance*, &c. 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. Here is grace growing in its kind ; and he goes on *from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 17. there is grace growing in the degree, *we are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren, because your faith groweth exceedingly*, 2 Theff. i. 2. It increaseth over and above. And the apostle speaks of those spiritual plants which were laden with gospel-fruit, *Phil.* i. 2. A christian is compared to the vine, (an emblem of fruitfulness) he must bear full clusters : we are bid to perfect that which is lacking in our faith, 1 Theff. iii. 10. A christian must never be so old as to be past bearing ; he brings forth fruit in his old age,

*Pf.* xcii. 14. An heaven-born plant is ever growing ; he never thinks he grows enough ; he is not content unless he add every day one cubit to his spiritual stature. We must not be content just with so much grace as will keep life and soul together, a drahm or two will not suffice, but we must be still increasing, *with the increase of God*, Col. ii. 9. We had need renew our strength as the eagle, *Isa.* xl. 21. Our sins are renewed, our wants are renewed, our tentations are renewed, and shall not our strength be renewed ? Oh be not content with the first *embryo* of grace, grace in its infancy and minority. You look for degrees of glory ; be you christians of degrees. Though a believer should be contented with a *modicum* in his estate, yet not with a *modicum* in religion. A christian of the right breed labours still to excel himself, and come nearer to that holiness in God, who is the original, the pattern and prototype of all holiness.

CHAP. XIII. Use 4. *Shewing how a christian may know whether he hath learned this divine art.*

Thus having laid down these three cautions, I proceed in the next place to an use of trial.

4. *How may a christian know that he hath learned this lesson of contentment ?* I shall lay down some characters by which you shall know it.

*Character 1.* A contented spirit is a silent spirit, he hath not one word to say against God, *I was dumb, or silent, because thou, Lord, didst it*, *Pf.* xxxix. Contentment silenceth all dispute, *he sitteth alone and keepeth silence*, Lam. iii. 28. There is a sinful silence, when God is dishonoured, his truth wounded, and men hold their peace ; this silence is a loud sin : and there is an holy silence, when the soul sits down quiet and content with its condition. When *Samuel* tells *Eli* that heavy message from God, that he would judge his house, and that the iniquity of his family should not be purged away with sacrifice for ever, 1 Sam. iii. 13. Doth *Eli* murmur or dispute ? No, he hath not one word to say against God ; *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, ver. 18. A discontented spirit faith as *Pharaoh*, *Who is the Lord ?* Why should I suffer all this ? Why should I be brought into this low condition ? *Who is the Lord ?* But a gracious heart faith, as *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what he will with me*. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, had offered up strange fire, and fire went from the Lord and devoured



scoured them; *Lev. x. 1.* is Aaron now in a condition of discontent? No, Aaron held his peace, *3.* A contented spirit is never angry, unless with himself, for having hard thoughts of God. When *Jonah* said, *I do well to be angry*; this was not a contented spirit, it did not become a prophet.

*Character 2.* A contented spirit, is a cheerful spirit; the *Greeks* call it *euthema*. Contentment is something more than patience; for patience denotes only submission, contentment denotes cheerfulness. A contented christian is more than passive; he doth not only bear the cross, but take up the cross, *Matth. vi. 24.* He looks upon God as a wife God; and whatever he doth, though it be not willingly, yet sensibly, it is in order to a cure. Hence the contented christian is cheerful, and, with the apostle, *takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses, &c.* *2 Cor. xii. 10.* He doth not only submit to God's dealings, but rejoice in them; he doth not only say, *Just is the Lord in all that hath befallen me*; but *good is the Lord*. This is to be contented. A sullen melancholly is hateful; it is said, *God loves a cheerful giver*, *2 Cor. ix. 7.* ay, and God loves a cheerful liver. We are bid in scripture, *not to be careful*, but we are not here bid *not to be cheerful*. He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy; and indeed he hath that within him which is the ground of cheerfulness; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart, *Mat. ix. 2.*

*Character 3.* A contented spirit is a thankful spirit. This is a degree above the other; *In every thing giving thanks*, *1 Thes. v. 15.* A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore hath his heart screwed up to thankfulness: others will bless God for prosperity, he blesseth him for affliction. Thus he reasons with himself, am I in want? God sees it better for me to want than to abound; God is now dieting of me, he sees it better for my spiritual health sometimes to be kept fasting: therefore he doth not only submit, but is thankful. The malecontent is ever complaining of his condition; the contented spirit is ever giving thanks. Oh what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a temple where the praises of God are sung forth, not a sepulchre wherein they are buried. A contented christian in the greatest straits hath his heart enlarged, and dilated in thankfulness, he oft contemplates God's love in election; he sees that he is a monument of mercy, therefore desires to be a pattern of praise.

There is always gratulatory music in a contented soul; the spirit of grace works in the heart like new wine, which under the heaviest pressures of sorrow will have a vent open for thankfulness; this is to be content.

*Character 4.* He that is content, no condition comes amiss to him; so it is in the text, *in whatever state I am*. A contented christian can turn himself to any thing; either want or abound. The people of *Israel* knew neither how to abound, nor yet how to want; when they were in want, they murmured; *Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?* And when they ate, and were filled, then they lifted up the heel. *Paul* knew how to manage every state; he could be either a note higher or lower; he was, in this sense, an universalist, he could do any thing that God would have him: if he were in prosperity, he knew how to be thankful; if in adversity, he knew how to be patient; he was neither lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other. He could carry a greater sail, or lesser. Thus a contented christian knows how to turn himself to any condition. We have those who can be contented in some condition, but not in every estate: they can be content in a wealthy estate, when they have the streams of milk and honey: while God's candle shines upon their head, now they are content; but if the wind turn and be against them, now they are discontented. While they have a silver crutch to lean upon, they are contented; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are discontented. But *Paul* had learned in every estate to carry himself with equanimity of mind; others could be content with their affliction, so God would give them leave to pick and choose. They could be content to bear such a cross; they could better endure sickness than poverty, or bear loss of estate than loss of children; if they might have such a man's cross they could be content. A contented christian doth not go to choose his cross, but leaves God to choose for him; he is content both for the kind and the duration. A contented spirit saith, let God apply what medicine he pleaseth, and let it ly on as long as it will; I know when it hath done its cure, and ate the venom of sin out of my heart, God will take it off again. In a word, a contented christian, being sweetly captivated under the authority of the word, desires to be wholly at God's disposal, and is willing to live in that sphere and climate where God has set him? And if at any time

time he hath been an instrument of doing noble and brave service in the public, he knows he is but a rational tool, a servant to authority, and is content to return to his former condition of life. *Cincinnatus*, after he had done worthily, and purchased to himself great fame in his dictatorship, did notwithstanding afterwards voluntarily return to till and manure his four acres of ground: thus should it be with christians, professing godliness with contentment, having served *Mars*, daring to offend *Jupiter*; lest otherwise they discover only to the world a brutish valour, being so untamed and headstrong, that when they have conquered others, yet they are not able to rule their own spirits.

*Character 5.* He that is contented with his condition, to rid himself out of trouble, will not turn himself into sin. I deny not but a christian may lawfully seek to change his condition: so far as God's providence doth go before, he may follow: but when men will not follow providence but run before it, as he that said, *this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?* 2 Kings iv. 33. If God doth not open the door of his providence, they will break it open, and wind themselves out of affliction by sin; bringing their souls into trouble. This is far from holy contentation, this is unbelief broken into rebellion. A contented christian is willing to wait God's leisure, and will not stir till God open a door. As *Paul* said in another case, *they have beaten us openly, uncondemned being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out,* Acts xvi. 37. So, with reverence, faith the contented christian, God hath cast me into this condition; and though it be sad, and troublesome, yet I will not stir, till God by a clear providence fetch me out. Thus those brave spirited christians, *Heb. xi. 35. They accepted not deliverance, that is, upon base dishonourable terms. They would rather stay in prison, purchase their liberty by carnal compliance. Estius* observes on the place, *they might not only had their enlargements, but been raised to honour, and put into offices of trust, yet the honour of religion was dearer to them, than either liberty or honour.* A contented christian will not remove till, as the *Israelites*, he see a pillar of cloud and fire going before him. *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord,* Lam. iii. 16. It is good to stay God's leisure, and not to extri-

cate ourselves out of trouble, till we see the star of God's providence pointing out a way to us.

CHAP. XIV. *Use 5. Containing a christian directory, or rules about contentment.*

I proceed now to an use of direction, to shew christians how they may attain to this divine art of contentation. Certainly it is feasible, others of God's saints have reached to it. *St. Paul* here had it; and what do we think of those we read of in that little book of martyrs, *Heb. xi.* Who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, who wandred about in deserts and caves, yet were contented; so that it is possible to be had. And here I shall lay down some rules for holy contentment.

§. 1. *Advance faith.*

All our disquiets do issue immediately from unbelief. It is this that raiseth the storm of discontent in the heart. Oh set faith a-work; it is the property of faith to silence our doubtings, to scatter our fears, to still the heart when the passions are up. Faith works the heart to a sweet, serene composure; it is not having food and raiment, but having faith, which will make us content. Faith chides down passion; when reason begins to sink, let faith swim.

Qu. *How doth faith work contentment?*

Ans. 1. Faith shews the soul, that whatever its trials are, yet it is from the hand of a father; it is indeed a bitter cup, but, *shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me to drink?* It is in love to my soul; God corrects with the same love he crowns me: God is now training me up for heaven, he carves me, to make me a polished shaft. These sufferings bring forth patience, humility, even the peaceful fruits of righteousness, *Heb. xii. 11.* And if God can bring such sweet fruit out of a sower stock, let him graft me where he please. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment.

2. Faith sucks the honey of contentment out of the hive of the promise. Christ is the vine, the promises are the clusters of grapes that grow upon this vine; and faith presseth the sweet wine of contentment out of these spiritual clusters of the promises. I will shew you but one cluster, *the Lord will give grace and glory,* Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Here is enough for faith to live upon. The promise is the flower out of which faith distils the spirits and quintessence of divine contentment. In a word, faith carries up the soul, and makes it aspire after more generous and noble delights than earth affords, and to live in the world above the world.

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Would



Would ye live contented lives? Live up to the height of your faith.

§ 2. Rule 2. *Labour for assurance.*

Oh let us get the interest cleared between God and our souls. Interest is a word much in use, a pleasing word; interest in great friends, interest-money. Oh, if there be an interest worth looking after, it is an interest between God and the soul: labour to say, *my God*. To be without money, and without friends, and without God too, *Eph. ii. 12*. Is sad; but he whose faith doth flourish into assurance, that can say, *I know in whom I have believed*, (as *St. Paul*) *2 Tim. i. 12*. That man hath enough to give his heart contentment. When a man's debts are paid, and he can go abroad without fear of arresting, what contentment is this! Oh, let your title be cleared; if God be ours, whatever we want in the creature, is infinitely made up in him. Do I want bread? I have Christ the bread of life. Am I under defilement? His blood is like the trees of the sanctuary; not only for meat, but medicine, *Ezek. xlvii. 12* If any thing in the world be worth labouring for, it is to get sound evidences that God is ours. If this be once cleared, what can come amiss? No matter what storms I meet with, so that I know where to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God, is so well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing else. To rest in a condition where a christian cannot say God is his God, is matter of fear; and if he can say so truly, and yet is not contented, is matter of shame. *David encouraged himself in the Lord his God*, *1 Sam. xxx. 6*. It was sad with him, *Ziklag* burnt, his wives taken captive, he lost all, and like to have lost his soldiers hearts too, (for they spake of stoning him) yet he had the ground of contentment within him, *viz.* An interest in God, and this was a pillar of supportment to his spirit. He that knows God is his, and all that is in God is for his good; if this doth not satisfy, I know nothing will.

§ 3. Rule 3. *Get an humble spirit.*

The humble man is the contented man; if his estate be low, his heart is lower than his estate; therefore be content. If his esteem in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himself, than others can have of him. The humble man studies his own unworthiness;

he looks upon himself as *less than the least* of God's mercies, *Gen. xxxii. 10*. And then a little will content him: he cries out with *Paul*, that *he is the chief of sinners*, *1 Tim. i. 15*. Therefore doth not murmur, but admire: he doth not say his comforts are small, but his sins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore is contented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himself; he knows the worst piece God cuts him, is better than he deserves. A proud man is never contented; he is one that hath a high opinion of himself; therefore under small blessings is disdainful, under small crosses impatient. The humble spirit is the contented spirit; if his cross be light, he reckons it in the inventory of his mercies; if it be heavy, yet he takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his estate is worse, it is to make him the better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, contentment will be the superstructure.

§ 4. Rule 4. *Keep a clear conscience.*

Contentment is the manna that is laid up in the ark of a good conscience; Oh take heed of indulging any sin. 'Tis as natural for guilt to breed disquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermine. Sin lies as *Jonah* in the ship, it raiseth a tempest. If dust or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cause a forenens in it; if the eye be clear, then it is free from that forenens: if sin be gotten into the conscience, which is as the eye of the soul, then grief and disquiet breeds there; but keep the eye of conscience clear, and all is well. What *Solomon* saith of a good stomach, I may say of a good conscience, *Prov. xxvii. 7*. *To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet*; so to a good conscience every bitter thing is sweet; it can pick contentment out of the cross. A good conscience turns the waters of *Marah* into wine. Would you have a quiet heart? Get a smiling conscience. I wonder not to hear *Paul* say, he was in every state content; when he could make that triumph, *I have lived in all good conscience to this day*. When once a man's reckonings are clear, it must needs let in abundance of contentment into the heart. Good conscience can suck contentment out of the bitterest drug, under slanders; *this is our rejoicing the testimony of our conscience*; *2 Cor. i. 17*. In case of imprisonment, *Paul* had his prison-songs, and could play the sweet lesson of contentment when his feet were in the stocks, *Acts xvi. 25*. *Augustine* calls it *the paradise of a good*

*good conscience*; and if it be so, then in prison we may be in paradise. When the times are troublesome, a good conscience makes a calm; if conscience be clear, what though the days be cloudy? Is it not a contentment to have a friend always by, to speak a good word for us? Such a friend is conscience. Good conscience, as *David's harp*, drives away the evil spirit of discontent. When thoughts begin to arise, and the heart is disquieted; conscience saith to a man, as the king did to *Nehemiah*, *why is thy conscience sad*, Neh. ii. 2. So saith conscience, hast not thou the *seed of God* in thee? Art not thou an *heir of the promise*? Hast not thou a treasure that thou canst never be plundered of? Why is thy countenance sad? Oh keep conscience clear, and you shall never want contentment. For a man to keep the pipes of his body, the veins and arteries free from colds and obstructions, is the best way to maintain health: so, to keep conscience clear, and to preserve it from the obstructions of guilt, is the best way to maintain contentment. First, conscience is pure, and then peaceable.

§. 5. Rule 5. *Learn to deny yourselves.*

Look well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things; (1.) Mortify your desires. (2.) Moderate your delights.

1. Mortify your desires. We must not be of the dragon's temper, who (they say) is so thirsty, that no water will quench his thirst: *mortify therefore your inordinate affections*, Col. iii. 5. In the Greek it is, your *evil affections*; to shew that our desires, when they are inordinate, are evil, crucify your desires, be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite.

Qu. *How should a christian martyr his desires?*

Ans. 1. Get a right judgment of the things here below: they are mean beggarly things; *wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* Prov. xiii. 5. The appetite must be guided by reason; the affections are the feet of the soul, therefore they must follow the judgment, not lead it.

2. Often seriously meditate of mortality: death will soon crop those flowers which we delight in, and pull down the fabric of those bodies which we so garnish and beautify. Think, when you are locking up your money in your chest, who shall shortly lock you up in your coffin?

2dly. Moderate your delights. Set not your heart too much upon any creature, *Isa. lxii.*

10. What we over-love, we shall over-grieve. *Rachel* set her heart too much upon her children, and when she had lost them, she lost herself too; such a vein of grief was opened, as could not be stetched, *she refused to be comforted*. Here was discontent. When we let any creature lie too near our heart, when God pulls away that comfort, a piece of our heart is rent away with it. Too much fondness ends in frowardness. Those that would be content in the want of mercy, must be moderate in the enjoyment. *Jonathan* dipt the rod in honey, he did not thrust it in. Let us take heed of ingulphing our selves in pleasure; better have a spare diet, than, by having too much, to surfeit.

§. 6. Rule 6. *Get much of heaven into your heart.*

Spiritual things satisfy; the more of heaven is in us, the less earth will content. He that hath once tasted the love of God, *Psa. lxiii. 5.* His thirst is much quenched towards sublunary things; the joys of God's spirit are heart-filling and heart-cheering joys; he that hath these, hath heaven begun in him, *Rom. xiv. 27.* And shall not we be content to be in heaven? Oh get a sublimie heart, *seek the things that are above*, Col. iii. 1. Fly aloft in your affections, thirst after the graces and comforts of the spirit; the eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the stinging of the serpent; the serpent creeps on his belly, and stings only such creatures as go upon the earth.

§. 7. Rule 7. *Look not so much on the dark side of your condition, as on the light.*

God doth chequer his providences, white and black, as the pillar of cloud had its right side and dark: look on the light side of thy estate; who looks on the back-side of a landscape? Suppose thou art cast in a law-suit, there is the dark side; yet thou hast some land left, there is the light side. Thou hast sickness in thy body, there is the dark side; but grace in thy soul, there is the light side. Thou hast a child taken away, there is the dark side; thy husband lives, there is the light side. God's providence in this life are various represented by those speckled horses among the myrtle-trees, which were red and white, *Zech. i. 1.* Mercies and afflictions are interwoven; God doth speckle his work. Oh, saith one, I want such a comfort? But weigh all thy mercies in the balance, and that will make thee content. If a man did want a finger, would he be so discontented for the loss of that, as not to be thank-



ful for all the other parts and joints of his body? Look on the light side of your condition, and then all your discontents will easily disband: do not pore upon your losses, but ponder upon your mercies. What? wouldest thou have no cross at all? Why should one man think to have all good things, when himself is good but in part? Wouldest thou have no evil about thee, who hast so much evil in thee? Thou art fully sanctified in this life, how then thinkest thou to be fully satisfied? Never look for perfection of contentment till there be perfection of grace.

§. 8. Rule 8. *Consider in what a posture we stand here in the world.*

1. We are in a military condition, we are soldiers, 2 Tim. ii. 3. Now a soldier is content with any thing; what though he hath not his stately house, his rich furniture, his soft bed, his full table, yet doth not complain: He can ly in straw as well as down; he minds not his lodging, but his thoughts run upon dividing the spoil, and the garland of honour that shall be set upon his head; and for hope of this, is content to run any hazard, endure any hardship. Were it not absurd to hear him complain, that he wants such provision, and is fain to ly out in the fields? A christian is a military person, he fights the Lord's battles, he is Christ's ensign-bearer. Now, what though he endures hard fate, and the bullets fly about? he fights for a crown, and therefore must be content.

2. We are in a peregrine condition, pilgrims and travellers. A man that is in a strange country, is contented with any diet or usage, he is glad of any thing; though he hath not that respect or attendance as he looks for at home, nor is capable of the privileges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows, when he comes into his own country, he hath lands to inherit, and there he shall have honour and respect: so it is with a child of God, he is in a pilgrim condition; *I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were*, Ps. xxxix. 12. Therefore let a christian be content; he is *in* the world, but not *of* the world; he is both of God, and is a citizen of the new Jerusalem, Heb. xii. 10. therefore, though *he hunger and thirst, and have no certain dwelling-place*, 1 Cor. iv. 11. Yet he must be content; it will better when he comes into his own country.

3. We are in a mendicant condition; we are beggars, we beg at heaven's gate, *give us this*

*day our daily bread*: We live upon God's alms, therefore must be content with any thing; a beggar must not pick and choose, he is contented with the refuse. Oh, why dost thou murmur that art a beggar, and art fed out of the alms-basket of God's providence.

§. 9. Rule 9. *Let not your hope depend upon these outward things.*

Lean not upon sandy pillars; we oft build our comfort upon such a friend or estate; and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our hearts begin either to fail or fret. A lame man leans on his crutches; and if they break, he is undone. Let not thy contentment go upon crutches, which may soon fail; the ground of contentment must be within thy self. The Greek word *autarkeia*, which is used for contentment, signifies self-sufficiency. A christian hath that from within that is able to support him; that strength of faith, and good hope through grace, as bears up his heart in the deficiency of outward comforts. The philosophers of old, when their estates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the mind, learning and virtue; and shall not a believer much more in the graces of the spirit, that rich enamel and embroidery of the soul? Say with thy self, if friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within which comforts me, *viz.* An heavenly treasure: when the blossoms of my estate are blown off, still there is the sap of contentment in the root of my heart; I have still an interest in God, and that interest cannot be broken off. Oh never place your felicity in these dull and beggarly things here below.

§. 10. Rule 10. *Let us often compare our condition.*

Qu. *How should I compare?*

Ans. Make this five-fold comparison.

Comparison. 1. Let us compare our condition and our desert together; if we have not what we desire, we have more than we deserve. For our mercies we have deserved loss; for our affliction, we have deserved more.

First, In regard of our mercies, we have deserved loss. What can we deserve? *Can man be profitable to the Almighty?* We live upon free grace. Alexander gave a great gift to one of his subjects; the man being much taken with it, this (saith he) is more than I am worthy of. I do not give thee this, saith the king, because thou art worthy of it, but I give a gift like Alexander. Whatever we have is not merit, but

but bounty; the least bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the garland of our salvation; he that hath the least mercy, will die in God's debt.

*Secondly*, In regard of our afflictions, we have deserved more. *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve*, Ezra ix. 13. Is our condition sad? We have deserved it should be worse; hath God taken away our estate from us? He might have taken away Christ from us: hath he thrown us into prison, he might have thrown us into hell, he might as well damn us, as whip us; this should make us contented.

*Comparison 2.* Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content: we look at them who are above us, let us look at them who are below us; we see, one in his silks, another in his sackcloth; one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with tears; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not sickness, but want, hath brought into a consumption! Think of this, and be content. It is worse with them who perhaps deserve better than we, and are higher in God's favour. Am I in prison? Was not *Daniel* in a worse place, viz. The lion's den? Do I live in a mean cottage? Look on them who are banished from their houses. We read of the primitive saints, *that they wandered up and down in sheeps skins and goat skins; of whom the world was not worthy*, Heb. xi. 37. Hast thou a gentle fit of an ague? Look on them who are tormented with the stone and gout, &c. Others of God's children have had greater afflictions, and have born them better than we. *Daniel* fed upon pulse, and drank water, yet was fairer than they who ate of the king's portion, *Dan. i. 15*. Some christians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulse and water, have looked better, viz. Been more patient and contented than we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoyce in affliction, and do we repine? Can they take up their cross, and walk cheerfully under it, and do we under a lighter cross murmur?

*Comparison 3.* Let us compare our condition with Christ's upon earth; what a poor, mean condition was he pleased to be in for us? He was contented with any thing. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became*

*poor*, 2 Cor. vii. 9. He could have brought down an house from heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth; but he was contented to be in the wine-press, that we might be in the wine-cellar; and to live poor, that we might be rich; the manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy; he, who is now preparing mansions for us in heaven, had none for himself on earth, *he had no where to lay his head*. Christ came in *forma pauperis*; who being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7. We read not of any sums of money he had; when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it, *Matth. xvii. 27*. Jesus Christ was in a low condition, he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the cross, and that was his humility; he was content to live poor, and die cursed. Oh compare your condition with Christ's.

*Comparison 4.* Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content.

*First*, Let us compare our spiritual estate with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood? We were heirs apparent to hell, having no right to pluck one leaf from the tree of the promise; it was a christless and hopeless condition, *Eph. ii. 12*. But now God hath cut off the entail of hell and damnation; he hath taken you out of the wild olive of nature, and ingrafted you into Christ, making you living branches of that living vine; he hath not only caused the light to shine upon you, but into you, 2 Cor. vi. 6. and hath interested you in all the privileges of sonship; is not here that may make the soul content.

*Secondly*, Let us compare our temporal estate with what it was once: alas, we had nothing when we stepped out of the womb; *For we brought nothing with us into the world*, 1 Tim. vi. 7. If we have not that which we desire, we have more than we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us (*but sin*;) other creatures bring something with them into the world; the lamb brings wool, the silk-worm silk, &c. but we brought nothing with us. What if our condition at present be low? It is better than it was once; therefore, having food and raiment let us be content? whether we have, God's providence fetcheth it in to us; and if we lose all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This was that made *Job* content, *naked came I out of my mother's womb*, Job. i. 21. As



if he had said, though God hath taken away all from me, yet why should I murmur? I am as rich as I was when I came into the world: I have as much left as I brought with me; naked came I hither: therefore blessed be the name of the Lord.

*Comparison 5.* Let us compare our condition with what it shall be shortly. There is a time shortly coming, when, if we had all the riches of *India*, they would do us no good: we must die, and can carry nothing with us; so saith the apostle, *it is certain we can carry nothing out of the world*, 1 Tim. iv. 7. Therefore it follows, *having food and raiment, let us therefore be content*, v. 8. Open the rich man's grave and see what is there; you may find the miser's bones, but not his riches, says *Bede*. Were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented, when we look upon our empty bags; but it is not so: God may presently seal a warrant for death to apprehend us; and when we die, we cannot carry our estate with us: honour and riches descend not into the grave, why then are we troubled at our outward condition? Why do we disguise ourselves with discontent? Oh, lay up a stock of grace; be rich in faith and good works, these riches will follow us, *Rev.* xiv. 13. No other coin but grace will pass current in heaven, silver and gold will not go there; labour to be rich toward God, *Luke* xii. 21. And as for other things, be not solicitous, *we shall carry nothing with us*.

§. 11. Rule 11. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.*

The way for a christian to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his spirit lower; not by making his barns wider, but his heart narrower. One man a whole lordship or manour will not content; another is satisfied with a few acres of land: what is the difference? The one studies to satisfy curiosity, the other necessity; the one thinks what he may have, the other what he may spare.

§. 12. Rule 12. *Study the vanity of the creature.*

It matters not whether we have less or more of these things, they have vanity written upon the frontispiece of them; the world is like a shadow that declineth; it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiseth more than we find, and fails us when we have most need of it. All

the world rings changes, and is constant only in its disappointments: what then, if we have less of that which is at best but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of mutation as motion; and what if God cut us short in sublunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to ice, which is smooth, but slippery; or to the *Egyptian* temples, without very beautiful and sumptuous, but within, nothing to be seen but the image of an ape: every creature saith concerning satisfaction, it is not in me. The world is not a filling but a flying comfort. It is like a game at tennis; providence bandies her golden balls, first to one, then to another. Why are we discontented at the loss of these things, but because we expect that from them which is not, and repose that in them which we ought not? *Jonah* was exceeding glad of the gourd, *Jon.* iv. 6. What a vanity was it? Is it much to see a withering gourd smitten? Or to see the moon dressing itself in a new shape and figure?

§. 13. Rule 13. *Get fancy regulated.*

It is the fancy which raiseth the price of things above their real worth; what is the reason one tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one shilling? Fancy raiseth the price; the difference is rather imaginary than real: so, why should it be better to have thousands than hundreds, is, because men fancy it so; if we could fancy a lower condition better, as having less care in it, and less account, it would be far more eligible; the water that springs out of the rock, drinks as sweet as if it came out of a golden chalice; things are as we fancy them. Ever since the fall, the fancy is distempered; *God saw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evil*, Gen. vi. 5. Fancy looks through wrong spectacles: pray that God will sanctify your fancy; a lower condition would content, if the mind and fancy were set right. *Diogenes* preferred his cynical life before *Alexander's* royalty; he fancied his little cloister best. *Fabricius*, a poor man, yet despised the gold of king *Pyrrhus*. Could we cure a distempered fancy, we might soon conquer a discontented heart.

§. 14. Rule 14. *Consider how little will suffice nature.*

The body is but a small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray for our daily bread; nature is content with a little. Not to thirst, not to starve, is enough, saith

*Gregory*

*Gregory Nazianzen*: meat and drink are a christian's riches, saith *St. Hierom*; and the apostle saith, *having food and raiment, let us be content*. The stomach is sooner filled than the eye; how quickly would a man be content, if he would study rather to satisfy his hunger than his humour?

§. 15. Rule 15. *Believe the present condition is best for us.*

Flesh and blood is not a competent judge. Surfeiting stomachs are for banqueting stuff: but a man that regards his health, is rather for solid food. Vain men fancy such a condition best, and would flourish in their bravery; whereas a wise christian hath his will melted into God's will, and thinks it best to be at his finding: God is wise, he knows whether we need food or physic; and, if we could acquiesce in providence, the quarrel would soon be at an end. Oh, what a strange creature would man be, if he were what he could wish himself? Be content to be at God's allowance: God knows which is the fittest pasture to pat his sheep in; sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank pasture may rot. Do I meet with such a cross? God shews me what the world is; he hath no better way to wean me, than by putting me to a step-mother. Doth God stint me in my allowance? He is now dieting me. Do I meet with losses? it is, that God may keep me from being lost. Every cross wind shall at last blow me to the right port. Did we believe that condition best which God doth parcel out to us, we should cheerfully submit, and say, *The lines are fallen in pleasant places.*

§. 16. Rule 16. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.*

We have taken an oath in baptism to forsake the flesh. The flesh is a worse enemy than the devil, it is a bosom-traitor; an enemy within is worst. If there were no devil to tempt, the flesh would be another *Eve* to tempt to the forbidden fruit. Oh take heed of giving way to it: whence is all our discontent but from the fleshy part? The flesh puts us upon the immoderate pursuit of the world; it consults for ease and plenty, and if it be not satisfied, then contents begins to arise. Oh let it not have the reins; martyr the flesh: In spiritual things the flesh is a sluggard, in secular things an horse-leech, crying, *give, give*. The flesh is an enemy to suffering; it will sooner make a man a courtier, than a martyr. Oh keep it under; put its neck under the yoke, stretch

and nail it to his cross: never let a christian look for contentment in his spirit, till there be confinement in his flesh.

§. 17. Rule 17. *Meditate much on the glory which shall be revealed.*

There are great things laid up in heaven. Though it be sad for the present, yet let us be content, in that it shortly will be better; it is but a while and we shall be with Christ, bathing ourselves in the fountain of love; we shall never complain of wants and injuries any more; our cross may be heavy, but one sight of Christ will make us forget all our former sorrows. There are two things should give contentment.

1. That God will make us able to bear our troubles, *1 Cor. x. 13.* God (saith *Chrysostom*) doth like a lutanist, who will not let the strings of his lute be too slack lest it spoil the music of prayer and repentance; nor yet too much adversity, lest the spirit fail before me, and the souls that I have made, *Isa. lvii. 16.*

2. When we have suffered a while, *1 Pet. v. 10.* we shall be perfected in glory: the cross shall be our ladder, by which we shall climb up to heaven. Be then content and then the scene will alter: God will ere long turn our water into wine; the hope of this is enough to drive away all distempers from the heart. Blessed be God it will be better: *We have no continuing city here*, *Heb. xiii.* therefore our afflictions cannot continue. A wise man looks still to the end; *The end of the just man is peace*, *Ps. xxxvii. 7.* Methinks the smoothness of the end should make amends for the ruggedness of the way. O eternity, eternity! Think often of the kingdom prepared. *David* was advanced from the field to the throne: first he held his shepherd's staff, and shortly after, the royal sceptre. God's people may be put to hard services here; but God hath chosen them to be kings, to sit upon the throne with the Lord Jesus. This being weighed in the ballance of faith, would be an excellent means to bring the heart to contentment.

§. 18. Rule 18. *Be much in prayer.*

The last rule for contentment is, be much in prayer. Beg of God, that he will work our hearts to this blessed frame; *Is any man afflicted, let him pray*, *Jam. v. 14.* So, is any man discontented? Let him pray. Prayer gives vent: the opening of a vein lets out bad blood; when the heart is filled with sorrow and disquiet, prayer lets out the bad blood. The key of prayer oiled with tears, unlocks the heart.



Heart of all its discontents. Prayer is an holy spell or charm to drive away trouble; prayer is the unbofoming of the soul, the unloading of all our cares in God's breast; and this ushers in sweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our spirits, by opening our mind to a friend, we find our hearts finely eased and quieted. It is not our strong resolutions, but our strong requests to God, which must give the heart ease in trouble: by prayer the strength of Christ comes into the soul: and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. *Paul* could be in every estate content; but that you may not think he was able to do this himself, he tells you, that though he could want and abound, and do all things; yet it was through Christ strengthening him, Phil. iv. 13. It is the child that writes, but it is the scrivener guides his hand.

CHAP. XV. Use 6. Of consolation to the contented christian.

The last use is of comfort, or an encouraging word to the contented christian. If there be an heaven upon earth, thou hast it. O christian, thou mayest insult over thy troubles, and, with the leviathan, laugh at the shaking of a spear, Job xiv. 29. What shall I say? Thou art a crown to thy profession; thou dost hold it out to all the world, that there is virtue enough in religion to give the soul contentment. Thou shewest the highest of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much for us to be content: but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses, tentations, agonies; now to be content; this is a glorious thing indeed.

To a contented christian, I shall say two things for a farewell.

First, God is exceedingly taken with such a frame of heart. God saith of a contented christian, as *David* once said of *Goliath's* sword, there is none like that, give it me, 1 Sam. xxi. 9. If you would please God, and be men of his heart, be contented. God hates a froward spirit.

Secondly, The contented christian shall be no loser. What lost *Job* by his patience? God gave him three times as much as he had before. What lost *Abraham* by his contentment? He was content to leave his country at God's call? The Lord makes a covenant with him, that he would be his God, Gen. xvii. He changeth his name; no more *Abram*, but *Abraham*, the father of many nations. God makes his seed as the stars of heaven: nay, honours them with his title, the father of the faithful, Gen. xviii. 17. The Lord makes known his secrets to him, shall I hide from *Abraham* the things that I will do? God settles a rich inheritance upon him; that land which was a type of heaven, and afterward translated him to the blessed paradise. God will be sure to reward the contented christian. As our Saviour said in another case to *Nathanael*, because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these, John i. 50. So I say, art thou contented (O christian) with a little? Thou shalt see greater things than these; God will distill the sweet influences of his love into thy soul: he will raise thee up friends; he will bless the oil in the cruse; and when that is done, he will crown thee with an eternal enjoyment of himself; he will give thee heaven, where thou shalt have as much contentment as thy soul can possibly thirst after.

## DIVERS DISCOURSES.

JAMES iii. 6. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

THE apostle *James* in this scripture, describes the evil of the tongue, *The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.*

1. *It is a fire.* It burns with intemperate heat; it causeth the heat of contention; it sets others in a flame.

2. *A world of iniquity.* It was at first made to be an organ of God's praise, but it is become an organ of unrighteousness. All the

members of the body are sinful, but the tongue is excessively sinful, full of deadly poison, ver. 8.

Doctrine, the tongue, though it be a little member, yet it hath a world of sin in it: the tongue is an unruly evil. I shall show you some of the evils of the tongue.

1. The evil tongue (travel a little over this world) is the silent tongue; it is wholly mute in matters of religion; it never speaks of God

or of heaven, as it cleaved to the roof of the mouth. Men are fluent and discursive enough in other things, but in matters of religion their lips are sealed up. If we come in to some people's company, we do not know what religion they are of, whether *Jews* or *Mahumetans*, for they never speak of Christ; they are like the man in the gospel, who was possessed with a dumb devil, *Mark* ix. 17.

2. The evil tongue is the earthly tongue: men talk of nothing but the world, as if all their hopes were here, and they looked for an earthly eternity; these have earthly minds: *John* vi. 31. *He that is of the earth, speaketh of the earth.*

3. The evil tongue is the hasty or angry tongue; they have no command of passions, but are carried away with them, as a chariot with wild horses. I know there is an holy anger, when we are angry with sin; Christ had this anger when they made the temple a place of merchandise, *John* ii. 15. That anger is without sin, which is against sin: but that is an evil tongue, which is presently blown up into exorbitant passion; this tongue is set on fire from hell. A wrathful spirit is unsuitable to the gospel; it is a gospel of peace, and its author is the prince of peace, and it is sealed by the spirit, who came in the form of a dove, a meek peaceable creature. Thou who art given much to passion, whose tongue is often set on fire, take heed thou dost not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool thy tongue.

4. The evil tongue is the vain tongue, that vents itself in idle words: *Pf.* x. 7. *Under his tongue is vanity.* A vain tongue shows a light heart; a good man's words are weighty and prudent; his lips are as a tree of life to feed many; his speech is edifying, *Prov.* x. 20. *The tongue of the just is as choice silver.* But, *Prov.* xv. 2. *The mouth of fools pours out foolishness.* How many idle away the day of grace in frivolous discourses? A wise man's words are like gold, weighty, and will sink into the hearts of others; but the words of many are light and feathery: and will make no impression, *Mat.* xii. 36. *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.*

5. The evil tongue is the censorious tongue, *James* iv. 12. *Who art thou that judgest another?* Some make it a part of their religion to judge and censure others; they do not imitate their graces, but censure their failings; such an

one is an hypocrite; this comes from pride. Were mens hearts more humble, their tongues would be more charitable. The censurer sits in the chair of pride, and passeth sentence upon another, and doth reprobate him: this is to usurp God's prerogative, and take his work out of his hands; it is God's work to judge, not ours. He who spends his time in censuring others, spends but little time in examining himself; he doth not see his own faults. There is not a greater sign of hypocrisy, than to be over-hasty in judging and censuring persons.

6. The evil tongue is the slanderous tongue, *Pf.* l. 20. *Thou sittest and slanderest thy own mother's son.* Slandering is when we speak to the prejudice of another, and speak that which is not true. Worth and eminency is commonly blasted by slander: holiness itself is no shield from slander; *John Baptist* came neither eating nor drinking, yet they say, *he hath a devil*, *Mat.* xi. 18. *Come and let us smite him with the tongue.* A slanderer wounds another's fame, and no physician can heal these wounds. *The sword doth not make so deep a wound as the tongue.* The Greek word for slanderer, signifies Devil, *1 Tim.* iii. 11. Some think it is no great matter to bely and defame another; but know, this is to act the part of a devil. The slanderer's tongue is a two-edged sword, it wounds two at once; while the slanderer wounds another in his name, he wounds himself in his conscience. This is contrary to scripture, *James* iv. 11. *Speak not evil one of another.* God takes this ill at our hands, to speak evil of others, especially such as are eminently holy, and help to bear up the honour of religion, *Numb.* xii. 8. *Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?* What, my servant, who hath wrought so many miracles, whom I have spoken with in the mount face to face, were not ye afraid to speak against him? So will God say. Take heed of this, it is a sin our nature is very prone to; and remember, it is no less sin to rob another of his good name, than to steal his goods or wares out of his shop.

7. The evil tongue is the unclean tongue, that vents itself in filthy and scurrilous words. *Eph.* iv. 29. *Let no corrupt communications proceed out of your mouth.* A sign of a great distemper, that the fever is high, when the tongue is black: a sign mens hearts are very evil, when such black words come from them.

8. The evil tongue is the lying tongue, *Col.* iii. 9. *Lie not one to another.* The Christians  
H h h h  
were



were noted for liars, *Tit. i. 12. The Cretians are always liars.* It becomes not christians to be Cretians. Nothing more contrary to God than a lie; it shews much irreligion: lying is a sin that doth not go alone, it ushers in other sins. *Abjalom* told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at *Hebron*, 2 Sam. xv. 7. and this lie was a preface to his treason. Lying is such a sin, as takes away all society and converse with men: how can you have converse with him, that you cannot trust a word he saith? It is a sin so fordid, that when the liar is convicted, he is ashamed. God's children have this character, they are children that will not lie, *Isa. 63. 8.* the new nature in them will not suffer them. The liar is near a kin to the devil, and the devil will shortly claim kindred with him, *John viii. 44. The devil is a liar, and the father of it.* He seduced our first parents by a lie, *Gen. iii. 4.* How doth this sin incense God? He struck *Ananias* dead for telling a lie, *Acts v. 5.* the furnace of hell is heated to throw liars into, *Rev. xxii. 15. Without are dogs, and forcerers, and whosoever loveth and telleth a lie.*

9. The evil tongue is the flattering tongue, that will speak fair to one's face, but will defame. *Prov. xxvi. 25. He that hateth, dissembleth with his lips.* When he speaketh fair, believe him not; dissembled love is worse than hatred. Some can commend and reproach, flatter and hate: [honey in their mouths, but a sting of malice in their hearts:] better are the wounds of a friend, that the kisses of such an enemy. *Hierom* saith, the *Arrian* faction pretended friendship; they, saith he, kissed my hands, but slandered me and sought my ruin. Many have dissembling tongues, thy can say, your servant, and lay snares, *Prov. xxix. 5. A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth snares for his feet.* You oft think you have a friend in your bosom, but he proves a viper. To dissemble love, is no better than a lie; for there is a pretence of that love which is not. Many are like *Joab*, 2 Sam. xx. 9. And *Joab* said to *Amasa*, art thou in health, my brother? And he took him by the beard to kiss him, and he smote him in the fifth rib that he died. For my part, I much question his truth towards God, that will flatter and lie to his friend. God will bring such an one to shame at last, *Prov. xxvi. 26. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.*

10. The evil tongue is the tongue given to

boasting, *James iii. 5. The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.* There is an holy boasting, *Pf. xlv. 8. In God we boast all the day,* when we triumph in his power and mercy: but it is a sinful boasting, when men display their trophies, boast of their own worth and eminency, that others may admire and cry them up: a man's self is his idol, and he loves to have this idol worshipped, *Acts v. 36. There arose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody.* 2. Sinful boasting is when men boast of their sins, *Pf. liii. 1. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?* Some boast how wicked they have been; how many they have made drunk; how many they have deflowred: as if a beggar should boast of his sores; or a thief boast of being burnt in the hand: such as boast of their sinful exploits, will have little cause to rejoice or hang up their trophies when they come to hell.

11. The evil tongue is the swearing tongue, *Matth. v. 34. Swear not at all.* The scripture allows an oath for the ending of a controversy, and to clear the truth, *Heb. vi. 16.* But in ordinary discourse to use an oath, and so to take God's name in vain, is sinful. Swearing may be called the *unfruitful works of darkness*, there is neither pleasure nor profit in it; it is like an hook the fish comes to without a bait, *Jer. xxiii. 10. Because of swearing the land mourns.* Some think it the grace of their speech; but, if God will reckon with men for idle words, what will he do for sinful oaths? Obj. But it is only a petty oath, they swear by their faith?

Ans. Sure they which have so much faith in their mouth, have none in their heart. But it is my custom. Is this an excuse or an aggravation of the sin? If a malefactor should be arraigned for robbing, and he should say to the judge, spare me, it is my custom to rob on the high-way; the judge would say, thou shalt rather die. For every oath thou swearest, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial.

Obj. But, may some think, what though now and then I swear an oath? Words are but wind.

Ans. But they are such a wind as will blow thee into hell, without repentance.

12. The railing tongue is an evil tongue: this is a plague fore breaking out at the tongue, when we give opprobrious language. When the dispute was between the arch-angel and the devil about the body of *Moses*, *Jude v. 9. The archangel*

archangel durst not bring a railing accusation against him, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. The archangel durst not rail against the devil. Railing oft ends in reviling, and so men bring themselves into a preminure, and are in danger of hell-fire, *Matth. v. 22.*

13. The seducing tongue is an evil tongue. The tongue that by fine rhetoric decoys men into error, *Rom. xvii. 18. By fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.* A fair tongue can put off bad wares; error is bad ware, which a seducing tongue can put off. The deceit lies in this; a smooth tongue can make error look so like truth, that you can hardly know them asunder: as thus, in justification, Christ bears infinite love to justified persons; this is a glorious truth: but under this notion, the *Antinomian* presseth *libertinism*; believers may take more liberty to sin, and God sees no sin in them. Thus, by crying up justification, they destroy sanctification; here is the seducing tongue: and error is as dangerous as vice; one may die by poison as well as a pistol.

14. The evil tongue is the cruel tongue, that speaks to the wounding the hearts of others. The tongue is made almost in the fashion of a sword; and the tongue is sharp as a sword, *Pf. lviii. 4. Their tongue is a sharp sword.* Kind, loving words should be spoken to such as are of a heavy heart, *Job vi. 14. To him, that is afflicted pity should be shown.* Healing words are fittest for a broken heart; but that is a cruel, unmerciful tongue, which speaks such words to the afflicted, as to cut them to the heart, *Pf. lxxix. 26. They talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Hannah was a woman of a troubled spirit, 1 Sam. i. 10. She was in bitterness of soul, and wept sore.* And now Eli, *v. 14. Said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.* This word was like pouring vinegar into the wound. When Job was afflicted with God's hand, his friends, instead of comforting him, tell him he was an hypocrite, *Job xi. 2.* These were cutting words, which went to his heart: instead of giving him cordials in his fainting, they use corrosives. This is to lay more weight upon a dying man.

15. The evil tongue is the murmuring tongue, *Jude 16. These are murmurers.* Murmuring is discontent breaking out at the lips; men quarrel with God, and tax his providence, as if he had not dealt well with them. Why should any murmur or be discontented at their

condition? Doth God owe them any thing? Or, can they deserve any thing at his hands? Oh, how uncomely is it to murmur at providence! It is fittest for a Cain to be wroth with God, *Gen. iii. 6.* (1.) Murmuring proceeds from unbelief. When men distrust God's promise, then they murmur at his providence, *Pf. cvii. 24, 25. They believed not his word, but murmured.* When faith grows low, then passions grow high. (2.) Murmuring proceeds from pride. Men think they have deserved better; and, because they are crossed, therefore they utter discontented expressions against God. He who is humble bears any thing from God; he knows his punishment is less than his sin, therefore saith, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, Micah vii. 9.* But pride of discontent; and hence come murmurings. Murmuring is a sin that God cannot bear, *Numb. xiv. 27. How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?* The murmurer discovers much ingratitude; a murmuring tongue is always an unthankful tongue: he considers not how he is a debtor to free grace, and whatever he hath is more than God owes him: he considers not that his mercies outweigh his afflictions; there's more honey in his cup than wormwood: he considers not what God hath done for him, more than such as are better than he: he hath the finest of wheat, when others feed, as Daniel, on pulse. The murmurer, I say, doth not consider this; but, because he is crossed in some small matter, he repines against God. Oh ingratitude! Israel, though they had manna from heaven, to satisfy their hunger, angel's food; yet murmured for want of quails; not content that God should supply their want, but must satisfy their lust too. Oh unthankful! Israel's murmuring cost many of them their lives, *1 Cor. x. 10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them did, and were destroyed of the destroyer.* Their speeches were venomous, and God punished them with venomous serpents.

16. The evil tongue is the scoffing tongue. The scoffer sits in the chair of scornors, and derides religion: surely the devil hath taken great possession of men, when they have arrived at such a degree of sin as to scoff at holiness. It was foretold as a sin of the last times, *2 Pet. iii. 3. There shall come in the last days scoffers.* Some scoff at the authority of scripture, deity of Christ, the immortality of the soul: this is the worst sort of tongues. When men have laid aside the veil of modesty, and



their consciences are seared, then they fall a scoffing at religion; and when once they are come to this, their case is desperate; no reproofs will reclaim them: tell them of their sin, and they will hate you the more, *Prov. ix. 8. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.* Such a man is on the threshold of damnation.

17. The evil tongue is the tongue given to cursing, *Pf. x. 7. His mouth is full of cursing*; a wishing some great evil to befall another: cursing is the scum that boils off from a wicked heart. Though it is true, *the curse causeless shall not come*; [it is not in man's power to make another cursed,] yet to wish a curse, is a fearful sin. If to hate our brother be murder, *1 John iii. 15.* Then to curse him, which is the highest degree of hatred, must needs be murder. To use an execration or curse, is for a man to do what lies in him to damn another. Some wish a curse upon themselves: so the Jews, *his blood be upon us*, &c. And so do your God-damners, as if damnation did not come fast enough, *Pf. cix. 17. As he loved cursing, so let it come to him.*

18. The evil tongue is the unjust tongue; that will for a piece of money open its mouth in a bad cause. The lawyer hath *linguam venalem*, a tongue that will be sold for money, *Pf. lxxxii. 2. How long will ye judge unjustly?* Some will plead any cause, though never so bad: though it appears the deeds are forged, the witnesses bribed, there's perjury in the cause; yet they will plead it. When a man pleads a bad cause, he is the devil's attorney: as God hates false weights, so a false cause. Better be born dumb, than open one's mouth in a bad cause. Oh what times are we in! Many pervert justice, and, for enriching themselves, overthrow a righteous cause; these are worse than they that rob; for they fleece mens estates under a colour of law, and ruin them under a pretence of doing justice.

Use 1. Branch 1. See what a blow we have sustained by the fall; it hath put out of frame the whole course of nature. Original sin hath diffused itself as a poison into all the members of the body: it hath made the eye unchast, the hands full of bribes; amongst the rest it hath defiled the tongue; it is a *world of iniquity*. That which was made to be the organ of God's praise, is become a weapon of unrighteousness.

Branch 2. If there be so much evil in the tongue, what is in the heart? If the stream be

so full of water, how full of water is the fountain? If there be a world of iniquity in the tongue, how many worlds of sin are there in the heart? *Pf. v. 9. Their inward part is very wickedness.* If the tongue, which is the outward part, be so wicked, the inward part is very wickedness, *Pf. lxiv. 6. The heart is deep*: it is such a deep as cannot be fathomed; deep pride, hypocrisy, atheism.

The heart is like the sea, where is the *leviathan*, and *creeping things*, innumerable, *Pf. civ.* If the skin hath boils of leprosy in it, how much corruption is in the blood? If the tongue be so bad, how diabolical is the heart? It is the heart sets the tongue a-work: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* There are the seeds of all atheism and blasphemy. *Mat. xv. 9. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries; these defile a man.* If a branch of wormwood be so bitter, then how bitter is the root? Oh, what a root of bitterness grows in a man's heart! Some say they have good hearts; but if the tongue be so bad, what is the heart? If I see a smoke come out of the top of a chimney, what a fire burns within? *Prov. vi. 12. 14. A wicked man walketh with a froward mouth; frowardness is in his heart.* Solomon shews the reason why the mouth is so froward, *Frowardness is in his heart.* The heart is a store-house of wickedness, therefore called *the evil treasure of the heart*, *Mat. xii. 35.* Original righteousness was a good treasure, but we were robbed of that; and now there is an evil treasure of sin. The word, *treasure* denotes plenty; to shew the fulness and abundance of sin that is in the heart. The heart is a lesser hell, which is a matter of deep humiliation, the heart is, like the *Egyptian temples*, full of spiders and serpents.

Use 2. Of reproof. It reproves such as abuse their tongues in all manner of evil speaking, lying, slandering, rash anger. The heart is a vessel full of sin, and the tongue sets it abroad. O how fast do mens tongues gallop in sin! they say, they give God their hearts; but let the devil take possession of their tongues, *Ps. xii. 4. Our lips are our own, who is lord over us?* Who hath any thing to do with our words? Who shall controul us? Who is lord over us? There is no engine the devil makes more use of than the tongue: what errors, contentions, impieties have been propagated this way, to the dishonour of the high God; David calls his tongue his glory, *Pf. lvii. 9. Awake, my glory.*

**Q. Why did he call his tongue his glory,** but because by it he did set forth God's glory in praising him? But a wicked man's tongue is not his glory, but his shame; with his tongue he wounds the glory of God; *it is set on fire from hell.*

**Use 3. Confutation.** *Branch 1.* It confutes the *Catharists* and *Perfectists*, that plead for perfection in this life. If the tongue hath so many evils in it, how are they perfect? *Prov. xx. 9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?* He makes a challenge to all the world. But the perfectist saith, *he is pure from sin*: like *Isidore* the monk, *non habeo, Domine, quod mihi ignoscas*; I have nothing, Lord, for thee to pardon. If pure and perfect, then they put Christ out of office, he hath nothing to do for them as an advocate, they have no need of his intercession: but, *Eccl. vii. 20. There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not*; how proud and supercilious are they who hold they are perfect, when the holiest men alive, at some time or other, offend in their tongue? There is no perfection on this side the grave.

*Branch 2.* It confutes the *Arminians*, those patrons of *free-will*: they say, *they have power to their own salvation; they can change their heart.* The apostle saith, *the tongue can no man tame*, James iii. 8. If they cannot bridle their tongue, how can they conquer their will? If they cannot master this little member [tongue] how can they change their nature?

**Use 4. Caution.** Take heed to your tongue; have a care that ye offend not with your tongue, *Pf. xxxiv. 14. Keep thy tongue from evil. Pf. xxxix. 1. I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.* An hard lesson! *Pambus* said he was above twenty years learning that scripture, not to offend with his tongue. The tongue is an unruly member; God hath set a double hedge before the tongue, the teeth and lips, to keep it within its bounds, that it do not speak vainly. O look to your tongue. When a city is besieged, he that keeps the gates of the city, keeps the whole city safe; so, if you keep the gates or doors of your mouth, you keep your whole soul.

*Rules for the well ordering and regulating your words, or the governing of your tongue, that you do not dishonour God therewith.*

**1st Rule.** If you would have better tongues, labour for better hearts. It is the heart hath

influence upon the tongue. If the heart be vain and earthly, the tongue will be so: if the heart be holy, the tongue will be so. Look to thy heart; get a better heart, and a better tongue.

**Q. How shall I get my heart bettered?**

**Ans.** Get a principle of grace infused. Grace is like the salt cast into the spring: grace changeth the heart, and sanctifies all the members of the body; it sanctifies the eyes, and makes them chaste; it sanctifies the tongue, and makes it meek and calm. When the Holy Ghost came upon the apostles, *they began to speak with other tongues*, Acts ii. 4. When God's spirit comes on a man with a sanctifying work, he speaks with another tongue; the speech is heavenly. Grace makes the heart serious, and that cures the levity of the tongue; when the heart is serious, the words are savoury.

**2d. Rule.** If you would not sin in your tongue, call to mind how you have formerly offended in your tongue, and that will make you more watchful for the future. Have not you spoken words that have favoured of discontent or envy? Have not you been guilty of censuring and slandering? Have not you been disguised with passion? Hath not your tongue out-run your discretion? Have not you spoken words that you have been sorry for afterwards, and have caused either shame or tears? O observe former failings, how you have sinned in your tongue, and that will be a good help for the future. *David* certainly made a critical observation upon some of his words, wherein he had offended: words of pride, *Pf. xxx. 6. In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* And, *Pf. cxvi. 14. I said in my haste, all men are liars: even Samuel*, and all the prophets, who promised me the kingdom, they are all liars; and I shall die before I can come to enjoy it. *David* having observed how he had offended in his tongue, he is more careful of his words, and made a strict vow with himself, that he would look better to them, *Pf. xxxix. 1. I said, I would take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.* Look to the former slips of your tongue, and how you have by your words provoked God, and that will be a good means to make you more cautious for the future. A mariner that hath twice touched upon a rock, and been like to be cast away, will be more careful how he comes there again.

**3d Rule.** Watch your tongue: most sin is committed for want of watchfulness. As the tongue



tongue hath a double fence set about it, so it had need have a double watch. The tongue, when it is let loose, will be ready to speak loosely; watch it, lest it run beyond its bounds in frothy and sinful discourse, *Prov. xxx. 32. If thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth*: that is (say some) lay thy hand upon thy mouth, in token of repentance. But it may bear another sense: if thou hast thought evil, if angry malicious thoughts come into thy mind, *lay thy hand upon thy mouth to stop thy lips*, that thy thoughts come not into words.

4th Rule. If you would not offend in your tongue, ponder your words well before you speak, *Ecc. v. 1. Be not rash with thy mouth. Some speak vainly because inconsiderately*; they do not weigh their words before they speak them. Doth not mind his words, but gives his tongue liberty, he may speak not only unadvisedly, but unholy, and give just offence.

5th. Rule. If you would not offend in your tongue, *pray to God to guard your tongue*, *Pf. cli. 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth*. Set not about this work in your own strength, but implore God's help; *the tongue can no man tame*, *James iii. 8*. But God can tame it; therefore go to him by prayer: pray, *Lord, set a watch before the door of my lips*; keep me, that I may speak nothing to grieve thy spirit, or that may tend to thy dishonour.

6th Rule. If you would be kept from evil speaking, inure your tongues to good speaking. If you would not have the cask have a bad scent, put good liquor into it; so, if you would not have your tongue run out sinfully, let it be used to good discourse; speak often one to another of Christ, and the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; *the spouse's lips dropped as an honey-comb*, *Cant. iv. 11*.

#### MOTIVES.

Use. To beware of tongue-sins.

1st. Motive. If you have no care of your tongues, all your religion is vain, *James i. 26. If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain*. Many a one will hear the word, and make a profession of religion, but cares not what liberty he takes in his tongue, to reproach and vilify others. This man's religion is vain; that is, 1. He hath no religion, his religion is but a shew or pretence. 2. It is vain, because it is ineffectual; it hath not that force upon him as religion ought.

2d. Motive. The tongue discovers much of

the heart, such as the tongue is, such commonly the heart is. A lascivious tongue shews a lustful heart; an earthly tongue a covetous heart; a murmuring tongue a discontented heart. The tongue is oft a commentary upon the heart.

3d. Motive. To allow ourselves in the abuse of the tongue, cannot stand with grace. I know a good man may sometimes speak unadvisedly with his lips; he may fly out in words, be in a passion, but he doth not allow himself in it; when his passion is over, he weeps, *Rom. vii. 15. What I do, I allow not*: but, for a man to allow himself in sin, censuring, slandering, dropping words like coals of fire; sure it is not consistent with grace.

4th. Motive. The sins of the tongue are very defiling, *James iii. 6. The tongue defileth*. Defiling to one's self, and chiefly defiling to others. The tongue conveys poison into the ear of another; sometimes by false suggestions, raising prejudices in the mind of another against such a person; sometimes by passionate speeches, the spirit of another is provoked.

5th. Motive. The sins of the tongue are provoking to God, and prejudicial to us. 1. *Provoking to God*; *Pf. cvi. 33. Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips*; what was this unadvised speech? *Numb. x. 10. 11. Hear now ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?* Though he were a favourite, and God had spoken with him face to face, yet God gives him a check for it; it turned his smile into a frown. 2. *Prejudicial to us*; *Moses's rash speech shut him out of Canaan*; it may shut us out of heaven, of which that was but a type. *Origen* notes, he had sinned most in his tongue; and God punished him most in his tongue.

6th. Motive. He who offends not in his tongue, is a perfect man: an high expression; if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, that is attains to a very high degree, in the highest form of Christ's school. A prudent man, or an upright man; or comparatively, in comparison of others, such as have not gotten the conquest over their passions, he is far above them, and, in comparison of them, he is a perfect man; such an one was holy *Cranmer*, that could not be provoked by the ill carriage of others, but requited injuries with kindness.

7th. Motive. You must give an account to God, as well of your speeches, as your actions, *Matth. xii. 36. Every idle word that men shall speak,*

*Speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment: words of no account, will have an heavy account. And, if God will reckon with men for every idle, angry word; then, what will he do for sinful oaths? O that my words were written, Job xix. 23. Truly, if many peoples words were written, they would be ashamed of them. And, let me tell you, your words are written, Rev. xx. The books were opened. In the book of God's remembrance, all your words are written: you had need then be careful you offend not with your tongues;*

*God writes down all you speak, and you must give an account to him. When Latimer heard the pen going behind the hangings, he was careful in his answers: and let me tell you, as your words are, such will your sentence be; when the books are opened, God will proceed with you in judicature, according to your words. By your words you shall be saved or condemned, Matth. xii. 37. By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

**GAL. vi. 9.** *And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

**I**N the verses before the text, the apostle had laid down a proposition, *What a man soweth that shall he reap*, v. 7. He that sows in sin, shall reap in sorrow; he that sows the seeds of grace shall reap glory: there is the proposition. In the text, the apostle makes the application, *Let us not be weary in well-doing.* We that have sown the good seed of repentance, and an holy life, *Let us not be weary; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

1. A Dehortation; *Let us not be weary.*
2. The argument; *we shall reap in due season.*

*First, A Dehortation; Let us not be weary.* Where there is, (1.) Something *implied*; that we are apt to be weary in well-doing. (2.) Something *expressed*; that we ought not to be weary in well-doing.

1. The thing *implied*, that we are apt to be weary in well-doing. This weariness is not from the regenerate part, but the fleshly; as *Peter's* sinking in the water, was not from the faith in him, but the fear: this weariness in a christian course is occasioned from four things;

(1.) From the revilings of the world; *Pf. li. 5. My enemies speak evil of me.* Innocency is no shield against reproach. But why should this make us weary of well-doing? Did not *Jesus Christ* undergo reproach for us, when the *Jews* put a crown of thorns on him, and bowed the knee in scorn? Is it any dishonour to us to be reproached for doing that which is good? Is it any disparagement to a virgin to be reproached for her beauty and chastity? Our reproaches for *Christ*, we should bind as a

crown about our head. Now a *spirit of glory rests upon us*, 1 *Pet. iv. 14.* *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you. Regium est bene facere & male audire: he that clips out credit to make it weigh lighter, makes our crown heavier.* (2.) That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the present sufferings we are exposed to, 2 *Cor. iv. 8.* *We are troubled on every side.* But why should this make us weary of well doing? Is not our life a warfare? It is no more strange to meet with sufferings in religion, than for a mariner to meet with storms, or a soldier to meet with bullets. Do not we consider upon what terms we entered into religion! Did not we vow in baptism to fight under *Christ's* banner? Doth not our Lord tell us, we must take up the cross and follow him? *Mat. xvi. 24.* Is not this part of the legacy *Christ* hath bequeathed us? *John xvi. 33.* We would partake of *Christ's* glory but not of his sufferings: besides, doth not many a man suffer for his sins? Do not mens lusts bring them to an untimely end? Do men suffer for their sins, and do we think much to suffer for *Christ*? How did *St. Paul* rejoice in sufferings? 2 *Cor. vii. 4.* How did he glory in it? As a woman that is proud of her jewels, *Chrysost.* Why should sufferings make us faint? Who would not be willing to tread upon a few thorns, that is going to a kingdom?

3. That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the deferring of the reward. We are apt to be discouraged and grow weary, if



if we have not what we desire presently; we are all for present pay. But consider,

(1.) Our work is not yet done, we have not yet finished the faith: the servant doth not receive his pay, till his work be done. Even Christ's reward was deferred till he had done his work; when he had completed our redemption, and laid upon the cross, *it is finished*, then he entered into glory.

(2.) God defers the reward, to make heaven more welcome to us. After all our praying, weeping, suffering, how sweet will the joys of paradise taste!

4. That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the greatness and difficulty of a christian's work: but why should this make us weary? Difficulty whets a generous mind; the soldier's life hath its difficulties, but they raise his spirits the more; he loves to encounter hardship, and will endure a bloody fight for a golden harvest.

Besides, where is the least principle of grace, it renders the way of religion easy and pleasant. When the loadstone draws, it is easy for the iron to move; when God's spirit draws, we move in the way of religion with facility and delight. Christ's service is freedom, *Pf. cxix. 45. I will walk at liberty*. To serve God, to love God, to enjoy God is the sweetest liberty in the world. Besides, while we serve God, we gratify ourselves; as he who digs in a mine, while he sweats, he gets gold; while we glorify God, we promote our own glory.

II. The second thing expressed, is, *That we should not grow weary in a christian course*, we should not tire in our race; *Let us not be weary in well-doing*. The Greek word, to be weary, signifies, to shrink back as cowards in war: let it not be thus with us; let us not shrink back from Christ's colours, *Heb. iv. 14. Let us hold fast our profession*: We must not only hold forth our profession, but hold fast our profession. *The crown is not given to him that fights, but to him that overcomes*.

1st Use, *Of reproof*. It reproves such as are weary of well-doing. There are falling-stars, *2 Tim. iv. 10. Demas forsook God*, and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, *Dorotheus*. *Hos. viii. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good*. Many have thrown off Christ's society; they have left off an holy course of life, they have turned to worldliness or wantonness. *Gal. v. 7. Ye did run well, who hindered you?*

Why did you tire in your race? *2 Pet. ii. 21. It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment*.

2d Use, *Exhortation*. *Let us not be weary in well-doing*. Consider,

1. The way of religion is of good report, *Heb. xi. 2. By faith the elders obtained a good report*. Shall we be weary of that which is our credit? If indeed the christian religion were a thing that would bring shame or loss (as the ways of sin do) then we had cause to desert it, and grow weary of it; but it brings honour, *Prov. iv. 9. She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace*. Why then should we be weary of well-doing?

2. The beauty of a christian is to hold on in piety without being weary, *Acts xxi. 16. Mnason of Cyprus an old disciple*. It is a beautiful sight to see silver hairs crowned with golden virtue: the beauty of a thing is when it comes to be finished. The beauty of a picture is, when it is drawn out in its full lineaments, and laid in its orient colours. The beauty of a christian is, when he hath finished his faith, *2 Tim. iv. 7. It was the glory of the church of Thyatira, she kept her best wine till last*, *Rev. ii. 19. I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first*.

3. Such as are weary of well-doing, it is a sign they never acted in religion from choice, or from a principle of faith, but from the external spring of applause or preferment; so that, when these fail, their seeming goodness ceaseth.

4. *God is never weary of doing us good*; therefore we should not be weary of serving him. A king that is continually obliging his subject by gifts and graces, that subject hath no cause to be weary of serving his prince.

5. If we grow weary, and throw off religion, we make all we have done null and void, *Ezek. xviii. 24. When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned*. He who hath been serving God, and doing angels work, if once he grows weary and desists, he unravels all his work, and misseeth of the recompence of reward: *He that runs half a race, and then tires, loseth the garland*. O what folly is it to do well a while, and then by apostacy to undo all! As if a limner should with a pencil draw a fair picture, and then come with his sponge and wipe it out again.

6. Con-

6. Consider the examples of such as have continued their progress unweariably in a christian course. The apostle sets before our eyes a cloud of witnesses: *Heb. xii. 1. Being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race that is set before us*; let us run it with swiftness and constancy. How many noble martyrs and confessors of old, have walked in the ways of God, though they have been strewed with thorns? They scorned preferments, laughed at imprisonments, and their love to Christ burned hotter than the fire. *Poly-carp*, when he came before the proconsul; and he bade him deny Christ; he replied *I have served Christ these eighty six years, and he hath not once hurt me, and shall I deny him now?* *Tertullian* saith, such was the constancy of the primitive saints, that the persecutors cried out, *what a misery is this, that we are more weary in tormenting, than they are in enduring torment?* Let us tread in their steps, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

7. It will be our comfort on our death-bed, to review a well-spent life. It was *Augustin's* wish, that he might have a quiet, easy death. If any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, that we have been unweariably in God's work; this will be a death-bed cordial. Did you ever know any repent at death that they had been too holy? Many have repented that they have followed the world too much; not that they have prayed too much, that they have repented too much. What hath made death sweet, but that they have finished their course, and kept the faith?

8. Think of the great reward we shall have, if we do not give over, or grow weary, and that is, glory and immortality. (1.) This glory is ponderous; it is called a *weight of glory*, *1 Cor. iv. 17*. The weight adds to the worth; the weightier a crown of gold is, the more it is worth. (2.) It is satisfying, *Pf. xvii. 15. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness*. This glory will abundantly recompense all our labours and sufferings. The joy of harvest will make amends for all the labour in sowing. O what an harvest shall the saints reap! It will be always reaping-time in heaven, and this reaping will in due season: so the apostle saith in the text, *We shall reap in due season*. The husband-man doth not desire to reap till the season; he will not reap his corn while it is green, but when it is ripe; so we shall reap the reward of glory in due season: when our work is done,

when our sins are purged out, when our graces are come to their full growth, then is the season of reaping; therefore let us not be weary of well-doing, but hold on in prayer, reading, and all the exercises of religion; we shall reap in due season, if we faint not. To keep us from fainting, know, that the reward promised is very near, *Rom. xiii. 11. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed*. We are but within a few days march of the heavenly *Canaan*; it is but a few more prayers and tears shed, and we shall be perfect in glory; as that martyr *Dr. Taylor* said, *I have but one stile more to go over, and I shall be at my Father's house*. Stay but a while, christians, and your trouble shall be over, and your coronation-day shall come. Christ who is the oracle of truth hath said, *Behold, I come quickly*, *Rev. xxii. 20*. And yet death's coming is sooner than Christ's personal coming, and then begins the saints blessed jubilee.

Qu. What means shall we use, that we may not wax weary in a christian course?

Ans. 1. Let us shake off spiritual sloth: sloth saith, *there is a lion in the way*. He who is slothful, will soon grow weary; he is fitter to ly on his couch, than to run a race. It is a strange sight, to see a busy devil and an idle christian.

Ans. 2. If we would not grow weary, let us pray for persevering grace: It was *David's* prayer, *Pf. cxix. 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe*. And it was *Beza's* prayer, *Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me*. That we may hold on a christian course, let us labour for three persevering graces. (1.) *Faith*. Faith keeps from fainting; faith gives a substance to things not seen, and makes them to be as it were present, *Heb. xi. 1*. As a perspective-glass makes those things which are at a distance near to the eye: so to faith, heaven and glory seem near. A christian will not be weary of service, that hath the crown in his eye. (2.) The second persevering grace, is *hope*. *Hope animates the spirits*: it is to the soul as cork to the net, which keeps it from sinking. Hope breeds patience, and patience breed perseverance. Hope is compared to an anchor, *Heb. vi. 19*. The christian never sinks, but when he casts away his anchor. (3.) Persevering grace is *love*. Love makes a man that he is never weary. Love may be compared to the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which refresheth him, and keeps him from being weary in his journey.



He who loves the world, is never weary of following the world; he who loves God will never be weary of serving him: that is the reason why the saints and angels in heaven are never weary of praising and worshipping God;

because their love to God is perfect, and love turns service into delight. Get the love of God in your hearts, and you will run in his ways, and not be weary.

JA. iii. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

THE apostle, in the former verses, had met with a sin common in those days, a sinful boasting among men, *ver. 13. Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain; where-as ye know not what shall be on the morrow: you may be in your graves before to-morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour.* A vapour being an exhalation, it cannot continue long as it is raised by the sun, so it is dispersed by the wind; such is your life; a vapour; a short breath, a flying shadow; it appears for a little time, and then vanisheth. Well, might they say, what need we be taught such a plain lesson? Who knows not all this, that life is a vapour, and that we ought not to boast what we will do to-morrow? The apostle seems in the text to meet with them by way of answer, do ye know all this? Then the greater is your sin that you do it not, *to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.* I shall only explain this phrase, *to him it is sin*; that is, it is an hainous sin, it is sin with a witness: every infirmity, every thing that falls short of the rule, is sin; much more, that which contradicts the rule. This man's sin hath an emphasis, it is a crimson sin, and it shall have a greater punishment, he that *knew his master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*, Luke xii. 47. If he that sins ignorantly be damned, then he that sins knowingly shall be double damned.

1. Doctrine implied, *that we ought to know to do good: know our duty.*
  2. *That we ought not only to know to do good, but to do it.*
  3. *That he that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, is of all others most guilty.*
- I. Doctrine implied, *that we ought to know to do good*; we ought to be well informed of those things which are to be done by us, in order to salvation. The words written is a rule of knowledge; and the word preached is a commentary upon the word written; and both of

them are to enrich our understanding, and to nurse us up in the knowledge of that which is good.

*The reasons why we should know to do good, are.*

1. Knowledge is our lamp and star to guide us in the truth. It shews us what we are to do, and what we are to leave undone. If we do not know that which is good, we can never practise it.

2. Knowledge is the foundation of all grace: of faith; *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee*, Ps. ix. 10. And of love *Phil. i. 9. This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge.* And of perseverance: the apostle joins these two such as are unlearned, will be unstable.

3. The chief work in conversion consists in knowledge, *Rom. xii. 2. Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* The mind being renewed, the man is transformed: The first part of God's image consists in knowledge, *Col. iii. 10.*

4. There is nothing in religion, though never so excellent, can do us good without knowledge.

*Use.* See how necessary it is to get the knowledge of what is good; it ushers in salvation, *1 Tim. ii. 4.* Ignorance of God is the cause of all sin, *Jer. ix. 3.* Ignorance of God damns, *Hos. iv. 6.* It is sad to be ignorant in gospel-times; but many, alas! do not only not know God, but they are not willing to know, *Jer. ix. 6. They refuse to know me saith the Lord.*

II. Doctrine. *That we ought not only to know to do good, but to do it.* This the apostle implies, *to him that knows to do good, and doth it not;* he implies, that he who knows to do good should do it: *the end of knowledge is practice.* Search from one end of the Bible to the other, and you will find, that it is the practice part of religion is chiefly intended. The crown is not set upon the head of knowledge, but practice, *Rev. xxii. 14. Blessed are they that do*

*do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.*

*Use 1.* It shews us wherein most christians are defective in the times of gospel, *viz.* In the doing part of religion, they *know how to do good, but do it not.* They know they should abstain from evil and pursue holiness; but tho' they know this, yet they do it not.

(1.) They know they should abstain from evil. Thus they know they should not swear, *Mat. v. 34. Swear not at all; yet they do it; they are more free of their oaths than their alms.* They know uncleanness to be a sin; that it wastes the body, wounds the conscience, blots the name, damns the soul, *Gal. v. 19.* yet they will go on in that sin, and, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath. They know drunkenness to be a sin; that it doth make them like beasts, takes away their reason, unfits them for happiness; for they cannot think to go reeling to heaven; they know that God is preparing a cup for the drunkard, *Rev. xvi. 19.* yet for all that they will not leave their drunken fits. Men know that rash censuring is a sin, *James iv. 11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren;* yet they are guilty of this: they will not swear, but they will slander, and speak to the prejudice of others; they can never make them recompence for this: no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue. Thus they know that covetousness is a sin, yea, *the root of all evil;* yet the world ingrosseth all their time and thoughts: they thirst after gold more than grace, and labouring more to have a full purse than a good conscience. They know they should not vent their passions, *Jam. i. 26. If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain.* Origen observes of the rich man in the gospel, he had no water to cool his tongue: he had sinned most in his tongue, therefore was punished most in it. How unworthy is it for men to have their eyes and hands lift up to heaven, and their tongues set on fire from hell; at one time praying, and another time cursing? How can such pray in a family, that are possessed with an angry devil? Thus men know they should abstain from evil, but they do it not.

(2.) They know they should pursue holiness, but they do it not. They know they should read the word, sanctify the sabbath, use holy conference, pray in the families, redeem the time, walk circumspectly; they know to do good, but do it not.

*Qu. Whence is it that men know to do good, yet do it not?*

*Ans.* It is for want of sound conviction. Men are not thoroughly convinced of the necessity of practising godliness; they think there's a necessity of knowledge, because else there's no salvation; they will get some notions of Christ, that he is a Saviour, and has satisfied divine justice, and they hope they believe in him; well then, we tell them that faith and obedience go together; then God is merciful; and though they are not so good as they should be, yet free grace will save them. Thus men content themselves with general notions of religion, but are not convinced of the practising part of godliness.

2. Men know to do good, yet do it not, because they are not awakened out of *their spiritual sloth.* It is easy to get the knowledge of a truth, to give assent to it, to commend it, to profess it; but to digest knowledge into practice, is difficulty.

3. Men know to do good, but do it not, through *incredulity;* they are in part atheists. Did they believe that sin were so bitter, that wrath and hell followed it, would they not leave off their sins? Did they believe that to do the will of God were a privilege, religion were their interest, that there is joy in the way of godliness, and heaven at the end, would they not espouse holiness? But people, though they have some slight transient thoughts of these things, yet they are not brought to the belief of them; therefore though they know to do good, yet they do it not. The reason why there are so few doers of the word, is, because there are so few believers.

4. Men know to do good, but do it not, because the knowledge in their head never works into their hearts; it doth not quicken them, not warm their affections with love to the truth:

5. Men know to do good but do it not, because of prejudicate opinion. The things to be done in religion are judged to be too strict and severe; they restrain sin too much, or they press too much to holiness.

6. Men know to do good, yet do it not, because they love their sin more than they love the world, *Hos. iv. 8. They set their heart on their iniquity.* Some content themselves with having means of knowledge, *Judges xvii. 13. Then said Micah, now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to be my priest.* But what is one the better to know



what physic he should take, if he doth not take it.

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* Let me beseech you all who have been hearers of the word, and have gotten a great measure of knowledge, that, as you *know to do good, you would do it*. This is the soul of religion. *Luther* says, I had rather do the will of God, than be able to work miracles. *1st.* To do what you know, evidenceth your relation to Christ. You count it a honour to be near allied to the crown, but it is more honour to be akin to Christ. *2dly.* To know to do good, and do it, sets a crown upon the gospel, *Röm. xvi. 19.* *Your obedience is come abroad unto all men; not your knowledge, but your obedience.* To know to do good, and not to do it, hardens others in sin, scandalizeth religion, and makes people ready to turn atheists. When some of the *Spaniards* came to *Hispaniola*, the *Spaniards* carriage being loose and prophane, the *Indians* asked them, What God they served? They answered, The God of heaven: the *Indians* replied, Sure your god is not a good god that hath such bad servants. Thus to know to do good, yet do it not, puts a scar in the face of religion, and brings an evil report upon it; but to do what we know, trumpets forth the fame of the gospel, and makes them that oppose it, to admire it.

*3dly,* To know to do good and to do it, intitles you to blessedness, *Jam. i. 25.* *He shall be blessed in his deed: not for the deed, but in the deed.*

III. Doct. That he who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, is of all others the most guilty; to him it is sin, crimson sin; that is, it is heinous sin, capital sin, sin emphatically; sin with a witness, and punished with a vengeance.

Qu. What is it to sin presumptuously?

Ans. To sin presumptuously, is to sin against the light which shines in a man's conscience, *i. e.* A man is convinced those things he doth are sin: conscience saith, O do not this great evil: conscience, like the cherubims, hath a flaming sword in its hand, to affright and deter the sinner, yet he will pluck the forbidden fruit: This is to sin presumptuously.

This sin is highly aggravate, for two reasons.

(1.) Because sinning presumptuously against conscience, is after counsels, admonitions, warnings. Such an one cannot say, he was never told of his sin; he hath had *ministers rising up early*, who hath told him what a damnable thing sin was, yet he would venture on; so that

now he hath no excuse, *John xv. 22.* *Now you have no cloke for your sin.*

(2.) It is an aggravation to sin presumptuously against conscience, when it is after afflictions. After God hath made him hear the voice of the rod, he hath made him to feel sin bitter, to read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins; his sin was following evil company, and God hath punished him for it; he hath almost wasted his estate with riotous living, or he hath almost drunk himself blind, yet he will not leave his sin: his sin was uncleanness, and his body is diseased, and full of noxious humours; yet tho' he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. Here is an aggravation of sin, *2 Chron. xxviii. 22.* *In the time of his distress, did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz.*

*Use 3.* To know what is good, yet not to do it, is to sin presumptuously, is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness; it is so, because men can say nothing for their sins, can bring no reason, they make no defence for themselves, yet they are resolved to hold fast their iniquity like those *Jer. xviii. 12.* *And they said, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do after the imagination of his own evil heart.*

*Use 4.* Take heed of presumptuous sin. If God hath been so terrible against sins of infirmity and passion, as we see in *Moses* and *Uzziah*; O how fierce will his anger be against the presumptuous sinner! better never have known the ways of God, than to know to do it. Oh! as you love your souls, take heed of this!

1. Presumptuous sins are desperate sins, because they are committed with much premeditation and forethought. The presumptuous sinner doth not sin unawares, but he doth project and cast in his mind how to bring his sin about: As *Joseph's* brethren did in betraying him; as *Judas* did in betraying Christ; and as those *Jews* did that laid wait for *Paul*.

(2.) Presumptuous sins are desperate, because they are accompanied with pride. The sinner who knows the mind of God, yet will act contrary to it, says like *Pharaoh*, *Who is the Lord that I should obey him?*

(3.) Presumptuous sins are desperate, because they are accompanied with impudency. Such sinners are hardened, fearless, and without shame. Like *Judas*, they are hardened; though woes be pronounced

pronounced against them, they will sin: they are without fear like the Leviathan, *Job. iv. 33. And they have sinned away shame, Zeph. iii. 5. The unjust knoweth no shame, he hath a forehead of brass.* Nay, some are so far from blushing, that they glory in their shame, *Phil. iii. 19.*

4. To sin presumptuously, *to know what is good, yet not to do it*, is hainous, because it is Ingratitude: it is an *high abuse of God's kindness*; and God cannot endure, of all things, to have his kindness abused. God's kindness is seen in this, that he hath acquainted the sinner with his mind and will; that he hath not only instructed him, but persuaded him, made mercy stoop and kneel to the sinner; he hath wooed him with his spirit, that he would flee from sin; and pursue holiness: kindness is seen in this, that God hath spared the sinner so long, and not struck him dead in the act of sin: kindness in this, that though the sinner hath sinned against his conscience, yet now, if he will repent of sin, God will repent of his judgments, and mercy shall be held forth, *Jer. iii. 1. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me saith the Lord.* But the sinner is of a base spirit; he is not melted with all this love; but his heart like clay hardens under the sun. Here's an apparent abuse of God's kindness; and God cannot endure to have his kindness abused. The vulture draws sickness from perfumes; so the sinner contracts wickedness from the mercy of God. Here's high ingratitude.

5. To sin presumptuously, *to know what is good, yet not to do it*, is a contempt done to God. He cares not whether God be pleased or no; he will have his sin. Therefore the presumptuous sinner is said to *reproach God*, *Numb. xv. 30. The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord*, he reproacheth the Lord, though not explicitly, yet interpretatively: by his presumptuous sin, makes as if God were either ignorant, and did not know his wickedness; or impotent, and were not able to punish him. How horrid is this! there's a kind of *blasphemy* against God in every presumptuous sin.

6. To sin presumptuously, *to know what is good, yet not to do it*, is a bold contest with God, a daring of God to punish. The man that sins against conscience presumptuously, and will not be reclaimed, doth in effect say, what care I for the commandment? It shall be no check upon me, but I will go on in sin, and let God

do his worst. A godly man is said to *fear the commandment*, *Prov. xvi. 13.* He dares not sin, because the law of God stands in his way: but the presumptuous sinner doth not value the commandment; he will sin in spite of God's law. O desperate madness to dare God to his face! *1 Cor. x. 22. Do we provoke the Lord to anger? Are we stronger than he?* Good reason then we should take heed of presumptuous sin, since it is so hainous and desperate! *To him that knows to do good, yet doth it not, to him it is sin*; it is sin with a witness.

*Use 2. Trial.* Let us examine if we are not guilty of sinning thus presumptuously, knowing to do good yet not to do it. (1.) Is it not to sin presumptuously, when we live in the total neglect of duty? We know we ought to pray in our families, yet do it not. To live in the neglect of family duties, is not this to sin presumptuously? (2.) Is it not to sin presumptuously, when we will venture upon the same sins which we condemn in others? *Rom. ii. 1. Thou (christian) condemnest another for pride, and yet thou livest in that sin thy self.* A father condemns his son for swearing, yet he himself swears: the master reproves his servant for being drunk, yet he himself will be drunk. Is not this to sin presumptuously, to live in those sins which we condemn in others? (3.) Do not they sin presumptuously against conscience, who will sin in *spight of heaven*? Though they see the judgments of God executed on others, yet will adventure on the same sins? *Dan. v. 22. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this*: that is, thou sawest the judgments I inflicted on thy father. (4.) Do not they sin presumptuously, they know to do good, yet do it not, who labour to stifle the convictions of their conscience, and will not let conscience speak freely to them? This the scripture calls, *Holding the truth in unrighteousness*, *Rom. i. 18.* (5.) Do not they sin presumptuously, who after they have felt the smart of sin, it hath bred a worm in their conscience, a moth in their estate; yet, after all this, they again embrace their sins?

That I may shew you what you have to fear, and that I may beat you off from presumptuous sins, let these things be seriously laid to heart; (1.) These presumptuous sins, do much *harden the heart*. These are two of the greatest blessings, a sound judgment and a soft heart: but sinning presumptuously and knowingly doth congeal the heart;



heart; it doth both waste the conscience, and fear it, *1 Tim. iv. 2.* By sinning knowingly, a person gets a custom of sin; and the custom of sinning takes away the sense of sinning, *Eph. iv. 19. Being past feeling.* Tell the presumptuous sinner, there are treasures of wrath laid up for him, he fears not; his heart is like a piece of marble or adamant, that will take no impression. When men *know to do good, yet do it not*, their hearts are hardened in sensibly, and that is dangerous: (2.) Such as sin presumptuously, or they who know to do good, yet do it not, are self-condemned, *Tit. iii. 11.* The Sinner knows in his conscience he is guilty; that he hath sinned against warnings, education, conviction, therefore his own heart does and must condemn him. And when God judges and condemns him, he will clear his judge, *Pf. li. 4.* (3.) Presumptuous sins make deep wounds in the soul. They lead to despair, and despair is the agony of the soul. *Spira*, in despair was like a living man in hell; despair did suck out his marrow and vital blood; it made him a very anatomy. The sinner goes on stubbornly; yet his foolish heart tells him, all will be well: but, when God begins to set his sins in order before him, and conscience, which was before like a lion asleep, begins to be awakened, and roars upon him, and he sees death and hell before him, now his heart faints, his presumption is turned to despair, and he cries out as *Cain*, *Gen. iv. 13.* *My punishment is greater than I can bear.* Now the sinner begins to think with himself thus; I would have my sins, and I had them; and now I have the wrath of God with them; O how foolish was I to refuse instruction! But it is too late now; the mercy-seat is quite covered with clouds; I am shut out from all hopes of mercy; my wounds are such, that the balm of *Gilead* will not heal. The more presumption in the time of life, the more despair at the hour of death.

(4.) To know to do good and not to do it, to sin presumptuously, God may, in just judgment, leave such an one to himself. It is a terrible thing, when God shall say, thou hast, by thy presumptuous sin, affronted me, and provoked me to my face; therefore I will give thee up to thine own heart, thou shalt sin still; seeing thou wilt be filthy, thou shalt be filthy still.

(5.) To know what is good, yet not to do it; to sin presumptuously, is a great degree of

the sin against the *Holy Ghost*. Such as sin presumptuously, sin wilfully. Tho' presumption is not final apostacy, yet it comes very near to it; and a little matter more will make thee so guilty, that there remains no more sacrifice for sin. To sin presumptuously against light, may in time bring on malice and despight to the spirit: as it was with *Julian*, who threw up his dagger in the air, as if he would be revenged on God: when once it is come to this, there's but one step lower a man can fall, and that is into hell.

(6.) There is little hope for such as know to do good, yet do it not; know what is evil, but will not forbear. There were sacrifices for sins of ignorance, but no sacrifices for sins of presumption, *Numb. xv. 30.* Indeed presumptuous sinners hope all will be well, *Prov. xv. 16.* *The fool is confident.* Such a fool is spoken of, *Deut. xxix. 19.* *When he hears the words of this curse, he blesteth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk after the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but the anger and jealousy of the Lord shall smoke against that man.*

(7.) Such as sin presumptuously, that know to do good, yet do it not, know what is evil, yet will not forbear it, God refuseth all their services, whether reading, hearing, praying, or communicating. God abhors their sacrifice, *Isa. i. 15.* *When you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.* And *Hos. viii. 13.* *They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, but the Lord accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquities, and visit their sins.* Thus you see what cause you have to tremble, who are guilty in this kind; you see your misery.

Besides all that hath been said, consider these two things. (1.) You that sin presumptuously, that know to do good, and do it not; that know what is evil, yet will not forbear: you cannot sin so cheap as others; though sin will cost every one dear, yet it will cost you dearer. You go directly against conscience; and if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, you shall be sure to be punished,

(2.) You who sin presumptuously, cannot take so much pleasure in your sin as another may have. One whose conscience is less enlightened, tho' his sin will be bitter to him afterwards, yet at present he may roll it as honey under

under his tongue, and find pleasure in it: but you that sin against your knowledge, you cannot have so much pleasure in sin as he; for conscience will put forth a sting, and all the threatnings of the word will set themselves in battle-array against you, so that you can have no quiet. And that trouble thou feelest now in thy conscience, is but the beginning of sorrow.

*Qu. What shall we do that we may not sin presumptuously against conscience?*

*Ans. 1.* Take heed of little sins, though (to speak properly) there are no such things as little sins, no little treason; but comparatively, one sin may be lesser than another. *Take heed of little sins.* The frequent committing of lesser sins, will prepare for greater. A lesser distemper of the body, if it be let alone, prepares for a greater distemper: being unjust in a little, prepares for being unjust much, in Luke xvi. 10. Such as were at first more modest, yet by accustoming themselves to lesser sins, by degrees their sins have grown up to a

greater height, jayl-sins have begun at little sins. (2.) If you would not sin presumptuously, viz. Knowingly and wilfully, then reverence the dictates of conscience; get conscience well-informed by the word, as you set your watch by the sun, and then be ruled by it; do nothing against conscience. If conscience saith, Do such a thing, tho' never so unpleasant, set upon the duty. When conscience saith, Take heed of such a thing; come not nigh the forbidden fruit. Conscience is God's deputy or proxy in the soul; the voice of conscience is the voice of God: do not stifle any checks of conscience, lest God suffer thee to harden in sin, and by degrees come to presumptuous sin. (3.) Labour to have your knowledge sanctified. Men sin against their knowledge, because their knowledge is not sanctified. Sanctified knowledge works upon the soul; it inclines us to do good; it makes us flee from sin: sanctified knowledge is like a breast-plate, which keeps the arrow of presumptuous sin from entring.

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COL. iii. 11. *But Christ is all in all.*

THE philosopher saith, every science takes its dignity from the object; the more noble the object, the more rare the knowledge. Hence it is that Jesus Christ being the most sublime and glorious object, that knowledge which leads us to Christ, must needs be most excellent; it is called *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, Phil. iii. 8. So sweet is this knowledge, that Saint Paul determined to know nothing but Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. And indeed what needed he to know more? for Christ is *all in all*.

In the text there is a negation and an assumption; something the apostle sets down privatively, and something positively.

1. Privatively. St. Paul tells the Colossians what will not avail them, *neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth, &c.* Circumcision was a great privilege, it was a badge and cognizance to distinguish the people of God from those who were *exteri* and *forreign*; it was a pale between the *garden enclosed*, and the *common*. The people of circumcision were a people of God's circumspection, they were under his eye, and his wing; they were his household family; and

rather than they should want, God would make the heavens a granary, and rain down manna upon them; he would set the rock abroach, and make it a living spring; how glorious was circumcision! *Rom. ix. 4, 5.* What rich jewels hung upon *Israel's* crown! but in matters of salvation, all this was nothing, *neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, &c.* From whence we may observe:

That external privileges commend no man to God; whether wife or rich, or noble, this doth not set us off in God's eye. 1 Cor. i. 26. God sees not as man sees; we are taken with beauty and parts; these things avail not with God, God lays his left hand upon these, as *Jacob* did upon *Manasseh*, Gen. xlviii. 14. God often passeth by those who cast a greater splendour and lustre in the world, and looks upon them of an inferior alloy; the reason is, *that no flesh should glory in his presence*, 1 Cor. i. 29. If God should graft his grace only upon wisdom and parts, some would be ready to say, my wisdom, or my eloquence, or my nobility hath saved me; therefore not many wise, not many noble are called.

God



God will have no priding or vaunting in the creature.

*Use.* Rest not in outward privileges or excellencies, these are no stocks to graft the hopes of salvation upon; many of Christ's kindred went to hell. *Paul* is called *the servant of the Lord*, Rom. i. 1. And *James* is called *the brother of the Lord*, Gal. i. 19. It is better to be the servant of the Lord, than the brother of the Lord. The virgin *Mary* was saved, not as she was the mother of Christ, but as she was the daughter of faith; it is *grace*, not *blood* gives the precedency; an heart that hath *Christ formed* in it, is God's delight, and this brings me to the next.

2. The apostle sets down something *positively*; but *Christ is all in all*; in which words there is,

1. The subject, *Christ*: his name is sweet, it is as *ointment poured forth*, Cant. i. 3. It was *Job's* wish, *Oh that my words were now written, that they were graven with an iron pen, and laid in the rock for ever*, Job. xix. 23. And it is my wish, O that this name (this sweet name) of Christ, were now written, that it were graven with the pen of the Holy Ghost in our hearts for ever; the name of Christ hath in it, faith *Chrysestom*, a thousand treasures of joy.

2. The predicate, *all in all*; Christ is all fulness, all sweetness; he is all that is imaginable, all that is desirable; he who hath Christ, can have no more, for *Christ is all*.

The proposition out of the words, is, that Jesus Christ is the quintessence of all good things, *he is all*.

1. Sometimes *faith* is said to be *all*, Gal. v. 6. nothing availeth *but faith*; faith is all, as it is an instrument to lay hold on Christ, whereby we are saved; as a man is saved by catching hold on a bough.

2. Sometimes the *new creature* is said to be *all*, Gal. vi. 15. Nothing availeth *but a new creature*; the new creature is all, as it qualifies and fits us for glory; *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. It is a saying of *Chrysestom*, at the day of judgment God will ask that question, as our Saviour did, *Mat. xxii. 20. Whose image and superscription is this?* So will God say, whose image is this? If thou canst not shew him his image consisting in holiness, he will reject thee; thus the new creature is all.

3. Here in the text *Christ is said to be all*; but in what sense is Christ all? (1.) Christ is *all* by way of *eminency*; all good things are

eminently to be found in him; as the sun doth virtually contain in it the light of the lesser stars. (2.) Christ is *all* by way of *derivation*; all good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ; as your rich commodities, jewels and spices come by sea; so all heavenly blessings fall to us through the red sea of Christ's blood. *Rom. xi. 36. Through him are all things.* Christ is that spiritual pipe through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul.

Christ must needs be all; for *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead*, Col. ii. 9. He hath a partnership with God the father. *John xvi. 15. All that the father hath is mine*; so that there is enough in him to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens, to supply all our wants; there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

*Use 1. Information.* And it hath six branches. (1.) It shows us the glorious fulness of Jesus Christ; *he is all in all*. Christ is a panoply, a magazine and store-house of all spiritual riches; you may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness, but you will never have enough till you come to Christ; for he is *all in all*.

Now in particular, *Christ is all* in six respects.

(1.) Christ is *all* in regard of *righteousness*. 1 Cor. i. 30. *He is made to us righteousness*. The robe of innocency like the vail of the temple, is rent assunder, ours is a ragged righteousness. *Isa. lxiv. 6. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* As under rags the naked body is seen; so under the rags of our righteousness, the *body of death* is seen; we can defile our duties, but they cannot justify us; but Christ is *all* in regard of righteousness. *Rom. x. 4. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe*: that is, through Christ we are as righteous as if we had satisfied the law in our own persons. *Jacob* got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother; so in the garment of Christ our elder brother we obtain the blessing; Christ's righteousness is a coat woven without seam. 2. Cor. v. ult. *We are made the righteousness of God in him.* (2.) Christ is *all* in regard of *sanctification*. 1 Cor. i. 30. *He is made to us sanctification*. Sanctification is the spiritual enamel and embroidery of the soul; it is nothing else but God's putting upon us the jewels of holiness, the angels glory by it; we are made as the king's daughter, *all glorious within*, Ps. xlv. 13. This doth tune and prepare the soul for heaven; it turns

turns iron into gold, it makes the heart which was Satan's picture, Christ's epistle. The virgins, *Eth. ii. 12.* had their *days of purification*; they were first to be perfumed and anointed, and then they were to stand before the king; we must have *the anointing of God*, *1 John ii. 27.* and be perfumed with the graces of the spirit, those sweet odours, and then we shall stand before the king of heaven; there must be first our days of purification before our days of glorification; what a blessed work is this! a soul beautified and adorned with grace, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. O what a metamorphize is there! I may allude to that *Cant. iii. 6.* So, who is this that comes out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the spirit? Holiness is the signature and engraving of God upon the soul; but whence is this? *Christ is all*, he is made to us *sanctification*; he it is that sends his spirit into our hearts to be a *refiner's fire*, to burn up our dross, and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace; Christ ariseth upon the soul with *healing under his wings*, *Mal. iv. 2.* He heals the understanding, and faith, *let there be light*; he heals the heart by dissolving the stone in his blood; he heals the will, by filing off its rebellion. Thus he is all in regard of sanctification. (3.) Christ is all in regard of *divine acceptance*. *Eph. i. 6.* He hath made us favourites; so *Chrysostom* and *Theophylact* render it; thro' Christ God is propitious to us, and takes all we do in good part.

A wicked man being out of Christ, is out of favour; as his ploughing is sin, *Prov. xxi. 4.* so his praying is sin, *Prov. xv. 8.* God will not come near him, his breath is infectious; God will hear his sins, and not his prayers; but now in Christ God accepts us. *Eccl. ix. 7.* As *Joseph* did present his brethren before *Pharaoh*, and brought them into favour with the king, *Gen. xlvii. 2.* so the Lord Jesus carries the names of the saints upon his breast, and presents them before his Father, so bringing them into repute and honour; through Christ God will treat and parly with us, he speaks to us, as *Isa. lxii. 4.* Thro' the red glass every thing appears of a red colour; through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes. (4.) Christ is all in regard of *divine assistance*; a Christian's strength lies in Christ: *Phil. iv. 13.* Whence is it a christian is able to do duty, to resist temptation, but thro' Christ's strengthening? Whence is it that a

sparkle of grace lives in a sea of corruption, the storms of persecution blowing, but that Christ holds this sparkle in the hollow of his hand? Whence is it that the roaring lion hath not devoured the saints, but that the lion of the tribe of Judah hath defended them? Christ not only gives us our crown but our shield; he not only gives us our garland when we overcome, but our strength whereby we overcome. *Rev. xii. 11.* *They overcame him* (that is, the accuser of the brethren) *by the blood of the Lamb.* Christ keeps the fort-royal of grace that it be not blown up; *Peter's* shield was bruised, but Christ kept it, that it was not broken. *I prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*, *Luke xxii. 31, 32.* that it be not in a total eclipse. The crown of all the saint's victories must be set upon the head of Christ *Rom. viii. 38.* Write the name of *Michael* upon all your conquest. (5.) Christ is all in regard of *pacification*; when conscience is in an agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath; now Christ is all, he pours the balm of his blood into these wounds; *he maketh the storm a calm.* Christ doth not only make peace in the court of heaven, but peace in the court of conscience; he not only makes peace above us, but within us. *John xvi. ult.* Saith *Cyprian*, all our golden streams of peace flow from this fountain. *John xiv. 27.* *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.* Jesus Christ not only purchased peace for us, but speaks peace to us; he is called *the prince of peace*, *Isa. ix. 6.* Thus Christ is all in regard of pacification, he makes peace for us and in us; this honey and oil flows out of the rock Christ. (6.) Christ is all in regard of *remuneration*; he it is that crowns us after all our labours and sufferings; he died to advance us; his lying in the wine-press, was to bring us into the wine-celler; he is gone before to take possession of heaven in the name of all believers. *Heb. vi. 20.* *Whither the fore-runner is for us entred, even Jesus.*-----Christ is gone to bespeak a place for the saints, *John xiv. 2.* He makes heaven ready for them, and shakes them ready for heaven. Thus Christ is all in regard of remuneration. *Rev. xxii. 12.* *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.*

2. If Christ be all, it shews us what a vast disproportion there is between *Christ* and the *creature*; there is as much difference as between *ens* and *nihil*; Christ is all in all, and the creature is nothing at all. *Prov. xxiii. 5.* *Wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?* The creature



is a non-entity; though it hath a physical existence, yet considered theologically, it is *nothing*; 'tis but a gilded shadow, a pleasant fancy; when Solomon had sifted out the finest flowre, and distilled the spirits of all created excellency, here's the result, *ALL WAS VANITY*, Eccl. ii. 11. We read the *earth* in the creation *was void*, Gen. i. 2. So are all earthly comforts *void*; they are void of that which we think is in them, they are void of satisfaction; therefore they are compared to *wind*, Hof. xii.

1. A man can no more fill his heart with the world than he can fill his belly with the air he draws in. Now the creature is said to be *nothing* in a three-fold sense.

1. It is *nothing* to a man in trouble of spirit; if the spirit be wounded, outward things will give no more ease, than a crown of gold will cure the headache.

2. The creature is *nothing* to a man that hath heaven in his eye; when saint Paul had seen *that light shining from heaven, surpassing the glory of the sun*, Acts xxvi. 13. Though his eyes were open, *he saw no man*, Acts ix. 8. So he that hath the glory of heaven in his eye, is blind to the world; he sees nothing in it to allure him, or make him willing to stay here.

3. The creature is *nothing* to one that is dying; a man at the hour of death is most serious, and is able to give the truest verdict of things; now at such a time the world is nothing, 'tis in an eclipse, the sorrow of it is real, but the joy imaginary. Oh then what a vast difference is there between Christ and the creature! Christ is *all in all*, and the creature *nothing at all*; yet how many damn their souls for nothing?

3. It shews whither the soul is to go in the want of all; go to Christ who is *all in all*. Dost thou want grace? Go to Christ. Col. ii. 3. *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Christ is the great Lord treasurer; go then to Christ; say, Lord I am indigent of grace, but in thee are all my *fresh springs*, fill my cistern from thy spring. Lord, I am blind, thou hast eye-salve to anoint me; I am defiled, thou hast water to cleanse me; my heart is hard, thou hast blood to soften me: I am empty of grace, bring thy fulness to my emptiness. In all our spiritual wants, we should repair to Christ, as Jacob's sons did to their brother Joseph; *He opened all the store-houses*, Gen. xli. 56. and *gave to his brethren corn and provision for the way*, Gen. xlii. 25. Thus the Lord hath made Christ our Joseph, Col. ii. 3. *In him are hid*

*all treasures*. Oh then sinners, make out to Christ; he is *all in all*; and to encourage you to go to him, remember there is in him not only *fulness*, but *freeness*; ho every one that thirsts, *come ye to the waters*, Christ is not only full as the honey-comb, but he drops as the honey-comb.

4. If Christ be *all*, see here a christian's inventory, how rich is he that hath Christ! he hath all that may make him compleatly happy. Plutarch reports that the wife of Phocion being asked where her jewels were, she answered, my husband and his triumphs are my jewels. So if a christian be asked, where are his riches, he will say, Christ is my riches. A true saint cannot be poor, if you look into his house, perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie on, 1 Cor. iv. 11. *Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place*. Come to many a child of God, and bid him make his will, he saith as Peter Acts iii. 6. *Silver and gold have I none*; yet he can at the same time make his triumph with the apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 10. *As having nothing, yet possessing all*; he hath Christ who is *all*. When a believer can call nothing his, he can say *all is his*. The tabernacle was covered with badgers skins, Exod. 25. yet most of it was of gold; so a saint may have a poor covering, ragged cloaths, but he is inlaid with gold, *Christ is formed in his heart*, and so he is all glorious within.

5. How should a christian sit down satisfied with Christ! *Christ is all*. What though he wants other things, is not Christ enough? If a man hath sun-shine, he doth not complain he wants the light of a candle; hath not he enough, who hath *the unsearchable riches of Christ*? I have read of a godly man, who being blind his friend asked him if he was not troubled for the want of his sight? he confessed he was; why saith his friend, are you troubled because you want that which flies have, when you have that which angels have? So I say to a christian, Why art thou troubled for wanting that which a reprobate have, when thou hast that which the glorified saints have? Thou hast Christ with all his perquisites and royalties! suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house, but should settle all his land upon him, had he any cause to complain? If God denies thee a little furniture in the world, but in the meantime settles his land upon thee, he gives thee the field wherein *the pearl of price* is hid, hast thou any cause to repine: a christian that wants necessities,

necessaries, yet having Christ, he hath *the one thing needful*. Col. ii. 10. *Ye are compleat in him*; What? compleat in Christ, and not content with Christ? *Luther* saith, the sea of God's mercy should swallow up our particular afflictions; surely this sea of God's love in giving us Christ, should drown all our complaints and grievances; let the christian take the harp and the viol, and bless God.

6. If Christ be *all*, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person; he is poor, he is worth nothing, *Rev. iii. 17. Thou art wretched and miserable and poor, &c.* The sadness of a man that wants Christ, will appear in these seven particulars.

1. He hath no *justification*; what a glorious thing is it when a poor sinner is absolved from guilt, and is declared to be *rectus in curia*! but this privilege flows from Christ: all pardons are sealed in his blood. *Acts xiii. 39. by him all that believe are justified*: so that he who is out of Christ, is unjustified; the guilt of sin cleaves to him; he must be responsible to justice in his own person, and the curse stands in full force against the sinner.

2. He that wants Christ, wants the *beauty of holiness*; Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace. *John i. 14. Full of grace and truth.* Now a Christless person, is a graceless person, he hath not one shred of holiness. The *siens* must first be engrafted into the stock, before it can receive sap and influence from the root; we must first be engrafted into Christ, before we can *of his fulness receive grace for grace*, *John i. 16.* A man out of Christ is red with guilt, and black with filth; he is an unhallowed person, and dying in that condition, is rendred incapable of *seeing God*, *Heb. xii. 14.*

3. He that wants Christ, hath no true *nobility*; it is through Christ that we are akin to God, of the blood royal of heaven; it is thro' Christ that *God is not ashamed to be called our God*, *Heb. xi. 16.* But out of Christ we are looked upon as ignoble persons; the traitors blood runs in our veins: a man out of Christ is base-born; whoever is his natural father, the devil is his spiritual father, *John iv. 48.*

4. He that wants Christ, wants his *freedom*; *John viii. 36. If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.* A man out of Christ, is a slave, when he sins most freely.

5. He that wants Christ, hath no ability for service; he is as *Samson*, when his lock was cut;

his strength is gone from him, he wants a vital principle, he cannot walk with God, he is like a dead member in the body, that hath neither strength nor motion. *John xv. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* The organs will make no sound, unless you blow in them; so unless Christ by his spirit breath in the soul, it cannot make any harmony, or put forth strength to any holy action.

6. He that wants Christ, hath no consolation; Christ is called *the consolation of Israel*, *Luke ii. 25.* A Christless soul is a comfortless soul; how can such a one have comfort when he comes to die? he is in debt, and hath no surety; his wounds bleed and he hath no physician; he sees the fire of God's wrath approaching, and hath no screen to keep it off; he is like a ship in a tempest; sickness begins to make a tempest in his body, and sin to make a tempest in his conscience, and he hath no where to put in for harbour; oh the terror and anguish of such a man at the hour of death! *Is. xiii. 8. Their face shall be as flames*; an elegant expression! the meaning is, such fear and horror shall seize upon sinners in the evil day, that their countenances shall change and be as pale as a flame; what are all the comforts of the world to a dying sinner? he looks upon his friends, but they cannot comfort him; bring his bags of gold and silver, they are as smoak to sore eyes, it grieves him to part with them; bring him music, what comfort is the harp and viol to a condemned man? There is in *Spain Tarantula's* venomous spiders, and those who are stung with them, are almost dead, and are cured with music! but those that dye without Christ, who is *the consolation of Israel*, are in such hellish pangs and agonies, that no music is able to cure them.

7. He that wants Christ, hath no *salvation*. *Eph. v. 23. He is the saviour of the body*; he saves none but them who are members of his body mystical; a strong scripture against the doctrine of universal redemption; Christ leaped into the sea of his father's wrath, only to save his spouse from drowning; *he is the saviour of the body*; so that those who die out of Christ are cut off from all hopes of salvation.

2. It reproves them who busie themselves about other things with a neglect of Christ; *Isa. lv. 2. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* If you get all the world, you are but golden beggars without Christ.



The physician finds out noxious diseases, but is ignorant of soul-diseases; and while he gets receipts to cure others, he neglects the receipt of Christ's blood to cure himself. The lawyer while he clears other mens titles to their land, he himself wants a title to Christ. The tradesman is busied in buying and selling, but neglects to trade for *the pearl of price*; like *Israel*, who went up and down to gather straw; or like the load-stone, that draws iron to it, but refuseth gold. These who mind the word, as to neglect Christ, their work is but spider-work. *Hab. ii. 13. Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity?*

1. If Christ be *all*, then set an high valuation upon Jesus Christ. *1 Pet. ii. 7. To you that believe he is precious.* If there were a jewel which contained in it the worth of all jewels, would you not prize that? Such a jewel is Christ; so precious is he, that St. Paul counted all thing, *dung, that he might win Christ*, *Phil. iii. 8.* Oh that I could raise the appretiation of Jesus Christ! prize Christ above your estates, above your relations; that man doth not deserve Christ at all, who doth not prize Christ above all. Jesus Christ is an incomprehensible blessing; whatever God can require for satisfaction, or we can desire for salvation, is to be found in Christ; oh then let him be the highest in our esteem; no writing shall please me, saith saint Bernard, if I do not read the name of Christ there. The name of Christ is the only music to a christian's ear, and the blood of Christ is the only cordial to a christian's heart.

2. If Jesus Christ be all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances, till you have gotten this pearl of price; in Christ there is the accumulation of all good things; oh then let not your souls be quiet, till *this bundle of myrrhe* lie between your breasts, *Cant. i. 13.* In other things we strive for a propriety; this house is mine, these jewels are mine, and why not this Christ is mine? There are only two words which will satisfy the soul, *Deity* and *propriety*: *quid est Deus, non est meus?* saith Austin. What was it better for the old world they had an ark, as long as they did not get into the ark? And that I may persuade all to get Christ, let me shew you what an enriching blessing Christ is.

1. Christ is a supreme good; put what you will in the ballance with Christ, he doth infinitely out-weigh. Is life sweet? Christ is better!

he is the life of the soul, *Col. iii. 4.* his loving-kindness is better than life, *Pf. lxxiii. 3.* Are relations sweet? Christ is better; he is the friend that *sticks closer than a brother.*

2. Christ is a sufficient good; he who hath Christ, needs no more; he who hath the ocean, needs not the cistern. If one had a manuscript that contained all manner of learning in it, having all the arts and sciences, he need look in no other book; so he that hath Christ, needs look no further. Christ gives *grace* and *glory*, *Pf. lxxxiv. 11.* The one to cleanse us, the other to crown us; as *Jacob* said, *It is enough, Joseph is yet alive*, *Gen. xlv. 28.* So he that hath Christ, may say, it is enough, *Jesus is yet alive.*

3. Christ is a suitable good; in him dwells all fulness, *Col. i. 19.* He is whatever the soul can desire, &c. Christ is beauty to adorn, gold to enrich, balm to heal, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, salvation to crown; Christ is if we are in danger, he is a shield; if we are disconsolate, he is a sun; he hath enough in his wardrobe abundantly to furnish the soul.

4. Christ is a sanctifying good: he makes every condition happy to us, he sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses.

1. Christ sweetens all our comforts; he turns them into blessings; health is blessed, estate is blessed, relations are blessed. Christ's love is as the pouring sweet water on flowers, which makes them cast a more fragrant perfume. A wicked man cannot have that comfort in outward things as a godly man hath; he may possess more, but he enjoys less; he who hath Christ may say, this mercy is reached to me by the hand of my Saviour, this is a love-token from him, an earnest of glory.

2. Christ sanctifies all our crosses, they shall be medicinal to the soul; they shall work sin out, and work grace in; God's stretching the strings of his viol, is to tune it, and make the music better; Christ sees to it that his people lose nothing in the furnace but their drossie impurities.

5. Christ is a rare blessing, there are but few that have him; the best things when they grow common, begin to be slighted; when *silver was in Jerusalem as stones*, *1 Kings. x. 27.* it was apt to be trod upon; Christ is a jewel that few are enriched with, which may both raise our esteem of him, and quicken our pursuit after him; those to whom God hath given both the *Indies*, he hath not given them Christ; they have the fat of the earth, but not the dew of heaven; and

and among us protestants, many who hear of Christ, but few that have him. Read *Luke iv. 25.* There are many in this city who have Christ sounded in their ears, but few who have Christ formed in their hearts; O how should we labour to be of this few! they who are Christless, should be restless.

6. Christ is a select choice good; God shews more love in giving us Christ, than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. God may give us other things, and hate us; but in giving Christ to a man, he gives him the blessings of the throne; what though others have a crutch to lean on, if thou hast a Christ to lean on! *Abraham* sent away the sons of the concubines with gifts, but *he gave all he had to Isaac*, Gen. xxv. God may send away others with a little gold and silver; but if he gives thee Christ, he gives thee all that ever he hath; for Christ is *all, and in all*.

7. Christ is such a good, as without which nothing is good; without Christ health is not good, it is fuel for lust; riches are not good, they are golden snares; ordinances are not good, though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us, *they profit not*; they are as breasts without milk, as bottles without wine; nay, they are not only a dead letter, but a savour of death; without Christ, they will damn us; for want of Christ, millions go loaded to hell with ordinances.

8. Christ is an enduring good; other things are like the lamp, which while it shines it spends; *the heavens shall wax old like a garment*, Ps. cii. 26.---But Jesus Christ is a permanent good, with him are *durable riches*, Prov. viii. 18. They last as long as eternity it self lasts.

9. Christ is a diffusive communicative good; he is full, not only as a *vessel*, but as a *spring*, he is willing to give himself to us. Now then if there be all this excellency in Jesus Christ, it may make us ambitiously desirous of an interest in him.

*Qu.* But how shall I get a part in Christ?

*Ans.* 1. See your need of Christ, know that you are undone without him. How obnoxious are you to God's eye! how odious to his nature! how obnoxious to his justice! O sinner, how near is the sergeant to arrest thee! the furnace of hell is heating for thee, and what wilt thou do without Christ? It is only the Lord Jesus can stand as a screen to keep off the fire of God's wrath from burning thee. Tell me then, is there not need of Christ?

2. Be importunate after Christ, Lord, give me Christ, or I die. As *Asach* said to her father *Caleb*, Josh. xv. 19. (*Thou hast given a south land, give me also springs of water.* So should a poor soul say, Lord, thou hast given me an estate in the world, but this south-land will not quench my thirst, *give me also springs of water.* Give me those living springs which run in my saviour's blood; thou hast said, *Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. 18. Lord, I thirst after Jesus Christ, nothing but Christ will satisfy me; I am dead, I am damned without him, oh give me this water of life.

3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered, *a prince and a saviour*, Acts v. 31. Be sure you do not compound or indent with Christ. Some would have Christ and their sins too. Is Christ *all*, and will you not part with *something* for this *all*? Christ would have you part with nothing but what will damn you, if you keep, namely your sins.

There are some bid fair for Christ, they will part with some sins, but keep a reserve. Doth that man think he shall have Christ's love that feeds sin in a corner? O part with *all* for him who is *all*. Part with thy lusts, nay thy life if Christ calls. It exhorts us not only to get Christ, but to labour to know that we have Christ, 1 *John ii. 3. hereby we know that we know him.* This reflex act of faith is more than the direct act. Some divines call it the perception, or sensible feeling of faith; now concerning this knowledge that Christ is ours, which is the same with assurance, I shall lay down these four corollaries or conclusions. 1. That this knowledge is *feasible*, it may be had 1 *John v. 15, These things have I written to you that believe, that ye may know ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God.*

1. Why else doth God bid us make our calling and election sure, 2 *Pet. i. 10. if assurance may not be had? and to prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith*, 2 *Cor. xiii. 5. if we cannot come to this knowledge that Christ is ours?*

2. What are all the signs which the scripture gives of a man in Christ but so many ciphers, if the knowledge of this interest may not be had? 1 *John iii. 14. and 1 John iv. 13.*

3. There are some duties enjoined in scripture, which to perform is utterly impossible, if the knowledge of an interest in Christ be not



not attainable; we are bid *to rejoyce in God*, Phil. iv. 4. And *to rejoyce in tribulation*, 1 Pet. iv. 13. How can he rejoyce in suffering, who doth not know whether Christ be his or no?

4. Why hath Christ promised to send the *comforter*, John xiv. 16. Whose very work it is to bring the heart to this assurance, if assurance that Christ is ours may not be had?

5. Some of the saints have arrived at this certainty of knowledge; therefore it may be had. *Job knew that his redeemer lived*, Job xix. 25. And saint *Paul* had this assurance, 2 Tim. i. 12. Gal. ii. 20. Yea, may some say, *Paul* was an eminent believer, a christian of the first magnitude, no wonder if he had this jewel of assurance! nay, but the apostle speaks of it as a case incident to other believers, Rom. viii. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* He doth not say, who shall separate me? But *us!* so that by all it appears that a believer may come to spell out his interest.

**Caution 1.** Not that the saints have always the same certainty, or that they have such an assurance as excludes all doubtings and conflicts; there will be flowings and ebbings in their comforts, as well as in their graces; was it not so in *David*? Sometimes we hear him say, *God's loving-kindness was before his eyes*, Ps. xxvi. 3. As it is a proverbial speech, *I have such a thing in my eye*, I see it just before me; but at another time, *Where are thy loving-kindnesses?* Ps. lxxxix. 49. These doubtings and convulsions God suffers in his children sometimes, that they may long the more for heaven, where they shall have a constant spring-tyde of joy.

**Caution 2.** Not that all believers have the same assurance. (1.) Assurance is rather the fruit of faith, than faith: now as the root of the rose or tulip may be alive, where the flower is not visible; so faith may live in the heart, where the flower of assurance doth not appear, (2.) Assurance is difficult to be obtained; it is a rare jewel, but hard to come by; not many christians have this jewel. (1.) God sees it good sometimes to withdraw assurance from his people, that they may walk humbly.

(2.) Satan doth what he can to way-lay and obstruct our assurance; he is called *the red dragon*, Rev. xii. 3. If he cannot blot a christian's evidence, yet sometimes he casts such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read his evidence; the devil envies that God should have any glory, or the soul any comfort. (3.) That we want

assurance, the fault for the most is our own; we *walk carelessly*, neglect our spiritual watch, let go our hold of promises, comply with temptations; no wonder then if we *walk in darkness*, and are at such a loss, that we cannot tell whether Christ be ours or no.

(3.) Assurance is very sweet; this wine of paradise cheers the heart.

(4.) Assurance is very useful, it will put us upon service for Christ. (1.) It will put us upon *active* obedience; assurance will not (as the papists say) breed *security* in the soul, but *agility*; it will make us mount up with wings, as eagles, in holy duties; faith makes us *living*, assurance makes us *lively*; if we know that Christ is ours, we shall never think we can love him enough, or serve him enough, 2 Cor. v. 14. *The love of Christ constrains us.*

2. Assurance will put us upon *passive* obedience: Rom. v. 3, 5. *We glory in tribulation, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.* Mr. Fox speaks of a woman in queen *Mary's* days, who when the adversaries threatened to take her husband from her, she answered, *Christ is my husband*; when they threatened to take away her children, she answered, *Christ is better to me than ten sons*; when they threatened to take away all from her, saith she, *Christ is mine*, and you cannot take away him from me. No wonder saint *Paul* was willing to be bound, and die for Christ, Acts xxi. 13. When he knew that Christ *loved him*, and *had given himself for him*, Gal. iii. 20. Though I will not say, *Paul* was proud of his chain, yet he was glad of it, he wore it as a chain of pearl.

*Qu.* But how shall I get this jewel of assurance?

*Ans.* 1. Make duty familiar to you: when the spouse sought Christ diligently, she found him joyfully, Cant. iii. 4.

(2.) Preserve the virginity of conscience; when the glass is full you will not pure wine into it, but when it is clean; so when the soul is cleansed from the love of every sin, now God will pour in the sweet wine of assurance Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.* (3.) Be much in the actings of faith; the more active the child is in obedience, the sooner he hath his father's smile; if faith be *ready to die*, Rev. iii. 2. If it be like armour hung up, or like a sleepy habit in the soul, never look for assurance. (4.) If Christ be *all*, then make him so to you. (1.) Make Christ *all* in your *understanding*, be ambitious to know nothing

nothing but Christ: 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. What is it to have knowledge in physic? To be able with *Esculapius* and *Galen* to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease, and what is proper to apply, and in the mean time to be ignorant of the *healing* under Christ's wings? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy, to discourse of the stars and planets, and to be ignorant of Christ that *bright morning Star* which leads to heaven? What is it to have skill in a shop, and ignorant of that commodity which doth both enrich and crown? What is it to be versed in music, and to be ignorant of Christ, whose blood makes atonement in heaven, and music in the conscience? What is it to know all the stratagems of war, and to be ignorant of the *Prince of peace*? O make Christ all, be willing to know nothing but Christ; though you may know other things in their due place, yet know Christ in the first place; let the knowledge of Jesus Christ have the preheminance, as the sun among the lesser planets.

This is the crowning knowledge, *Prov.* xiv. 18. *the prudent are crowned with knowledge.* (1.) We cannot know our selves unless we know Christ; he it is who lights us into our hearts, and shews us the spots of our souls, whereby we abhor our selves in dust and ashes. Christ shews us our own vacuity and indigency; and untill we see our own emptiness, we are not fit to be filled with the golden oil of mercy. (2.) We cannot know God, but through Christ, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6.

2. Make Christ all in your affections. (1.) Desire nothing but Christ, he is the accumulation of all good things. *Ye are compleat in him*, *Col.* ii. 10. Christ is the christian's perfection; what should the soul desire less? What can it desire more? (2.) Love nothing but Christ; love is the choicest affection, it is the richest jewel the creature hath to bestow; Oh if Christ be all, love him better than all.

Consider 1. If you love other things, when they die your love is lost; but Christ lives for ever to requite your love. (2.) You may love other things in the excess, but you cannot love Christ in the excess. (3.) When you love other things, you love that which is worse than your selves; if you love a fair house, a pleasant garden, a curious picture, these things are worse than your selves; if I would love any thing more intensely and ardently, it should be something which is better than my self, and that is *Jesus Christ*. He who is all, let him have all; give

him your love who desires it most, and deserves it best.

3. Make Christ all in your abilities, do all in his strength. *Eph.* vi. 10. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* When you are to resist a temptation, to mortify a corruption, do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ: *Be strong in the Lord.* Some got out to duty in the strength of parts, and go out against sin in the strength of resolutions, and they come home foiled. Alas! What are our resolutions, but like the green withs which did bind *Samson*? A sinful heart will soon break these; do as *David* when he was to go against *Goliath*, saith he, *I come to thee in the name of the Lord.* So say to thy *Goliath-lust*, I come to thee in the name of Christ. Then we conquer, when the lion of the tribe of *Judah* marcheth before us.

4. Make Christ all in your aims, do all to his glory, 1 *Pet.* iv. 11.

5. Make Christ all in your affiance, trust to none but Christ for salvation; the papists make Christ something, but not all.

And is there not naturally a spice of popery in our hearts? We would be grafting happiness upon the stock of our own righteousness; every man (saith *Luther*) is born with a pope in his heart. Oh make Christ all in regard of recumbency, let him be your city of refuge to flee to, and your ark.

6. Make Christ all in your joy. *Gal.* vi. 14. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* *Luke* i. 47. O christian, hast thou seen the Lord Jesus? Hath this *morning Star* shined into thy heart with its enlightning, quickning beams? Then rejoice, and be exceeding glad. Shall others rejoice in the world, and will not you rejoice in Christ? How much better is he than all other things? it reflects disparagement upon Christ when his saints are sad and drooping; is not Christ yours, what would you have more?

*Obj.* 1. But such one, I am low in the world, and that takes off the chariot wheels of my joy, and makes me drive heavily?

*Ans.* But hast thou not Christ? And is not Christ all? *Pf.* xvi. 7, 6.

*Obj.* 2. If indeed I knew Christ were mine, then I could rejoice, but how shall I know that?

*Ans.* 1. Is thy soul filled with pangs after Christ? Dost thou desire as well *water* out of Christ's sides to cleanse thee, as *blood* out of his sides to save thee? These sighs and groans are stirred up by the spirit of God, by the beating



of this pulse, judge of the life of faith in thee.

2. Hast thou given up thy self by an universal subjection to Christ? this is a good sign that Christ is thine.

5. Be thankful for Christ; God hath done more for you in giving you Christ, than if he had set you with the *princes of the earth*, Pf. cxliii. 8. Or had made you angels; or had given you the whole world. In short God cannot give a greater gift than Christ; for in giving Christ, he gives himself to us; and all this calls aloud for thankfulness.

*Use ult.* Here is a breast of comfort to every man that hath Christ, *Christ is all*, it is good lying at this fountain head. When a christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all sufficiency in his Saviour. *Happy is that people*

*whose God is the Lord*, Pf. cxliv. *Ult.* That servant need not want, who hath his master's full purse at command; he need not want, who hath Christ; for *Christ is all and in all*. What tho' the *fig-tree* doth not flourish, if thou hast Christ the *Tree of life*, and all fruit growing there? In the hour of death a believer may rejoice, when he leaves all, he is possessed of all; as *Ambrose* said to his friend, *I fear not death because I have a good Lord*. So may a godly man say, I fear not death because I have a Christ to go to, death will but carry me to that torrent of divine pleasure which runs at his right hand for ever more. I will end with that 1 *Thess.* iv. 18. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

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